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Arcadias and Avalons:
Reframing Real Estate, Radicalism, and Race in the
Cooperative Commonwealth of Los Angeles, 1893 to 1929

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in History

by

Marlon Thann Gruen

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Alice Fahs, Chair
Professor Emily Rosenberg
Professor David Igler

2015

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While my interest in how writers engaged in American politics first began when I read Daniel Aaron's foundational work *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* as an undergraduate history major at California State University, Northridge, it took some time for me to conclude that there could be no more productive way to learn about literature and life than entering a doctoral program in history. I am forever thankful to all the CSUN history professors who made me think that such an idea was really possible, especially Miriam Neirick, Patricia Juarez-Dappe, and Tom Devine.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Arcadias and Avalons: Reframing Real Estate, Radicalism, and Race

In the Cooperative Commonwealth of Los Angeles, 1893-1929

by

Marlon Thann Gruen

Doctor of Philosophy in History, 2015

University of California, Irvine

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Metropolitan Los Angeles grew dramatically during an era when a culture of cooperation enabled a broad dialogue among ideological systems that throughout most of the twentieth century would remain in violent opposition. Cooperation manifested in a location where scholars rarely search for it: in the relationship between utopian literature and real estate development that prevailed between 1893 and 1929. This study analyzes the ways that utopian concepts became useful to the capitalist enterprises promoted by boosters and builders, along with socialist developers attempting to materialize a new social order. While most analytical approaches to this subject emphasize the separation and isolation of utopian movements and colonies from the mainstream, “Arcadias and Avalons” questions the definition of mainstream and expands the category of utopian colony. Drawing on research in cultural studies, literary criticism, intellectual history, and urban planning, I argue that the substance and form of Los Angeles drew from an Anglo-Saxon imaginary that promised every white man a house and a job and nurtured social movements to advocate for every issue except solving the race problem. Utopia demanded racial homogeneity, and this became an important and persistent intellectual principle that contoured Los Angeles community planning during its most crucial period of material and metaphysical development.

INTRODUCTION

In 1922 J.P. Warbasse, editor of the monthly magazine of the Co-operative League of America, *Co-operation*, wrote that “There is a little known book called *How to Know the Wild Flowers*. It tells their names and peculiarities.” According to Warbasse, “among other things it tells how to distinguish mushrooms from toadstools.” The people of the United States, Warbasse asserted, needed such an instructional manual “to guide them in the field of co-operation.”¹ The people needed to recognize the “wild co-op,” an institution that had become so ubiquitous in America over the past thirty years, and so intertwined with the capitalist mythos, that fake co-operative schemes were as commonplace as stock swindles and real estate scams.

This study argues that the theme of cooperation in America, and particularly in California, was both more socially and more commercially important than historians have realized. From 1893 to 1929, though radical political parties never dominated the state on their own, a cooperative capitalist commonwealth tenuously asserted its ideals in the Southland through agricultural, commercial, and residential real estate development projects that pushed radicalism from the edges of social thought to the center of a growing geographical and metaphysical terrain. This radicalism never entirely lost its socialist underpinnings, but it was also rooted in the same consolidation of capitalist power relations that was leading to the formation of corporate trusts. Angeleno cooperation was workers’ cooperation and producers’ cooperation – designed to equalize the power of small, medium, and large businesses and associations in order to grow entire economic sectors collectively rather than to create individualized barriers to competition.

¹ J.P. Warbasse, ed., “How to Know the Wild Co-Ops,” *Co-Operation*, Vol VIII, No. 1 (January 1922): 2.

Less true for the rest of the nation, in Los Angeles cooperation, at least as a slogan, affected a broad range of human endeavors besides business and industry. During this era, Los Angeles nurtured a zone of cooperation that brought small and large citrus growers into the same marketing organizations, saw parties on both extremes of the political spectrum support a new city charter, and promoted the development of both a rural countryside and an urban modernity in precisely the same geographic space. By engaging in this era of cooperation, the region was participating in an international dialogue, as well, but the nature of Angeleno participation, which was often noted by cooperationists from outside of California, proved to be idiosyncratic, not to mention complicated, incomplete, and often confusing.

The contention that collective goals might have been in play in Los Angeles, which many scholars characterize as a place where individualism expressed itself in extremes, may at first glance seem to be unlikely, yet as we explore the phenomenon more deeply, a nuanced, pragmatic rationale unfolds.² When the Depression of 1893 hit home, it began to break down the founding mythologies of Los Angeles as paradise, and the suspicion that the area had never really been Eden was becoming visible to anyone who was seriously looking. In the nearly half century between the Anglo annexation of California and the economic depression, the region's cattle industry had withered away as a result of droughts, disease, and Anglo squatters. The speculative real estate boom of the 1880s had collapsed, and the human population had actually declined in what should have been the promising city of Los Angeles.³

²See David Raiff, *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 24-38; The competing myths of individualism (fragmentation) and collective identity are discussed thoroughly in Michael Dear, Eric Schockman, Greg Hise, eds., *Rethinking Los Angeles* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996); for an earlier but still foundational argument about the nature of Los Angeles, see Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850 -1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

³ Norman M. Klein, *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 28.

But in the early nineties, before the Depression of 1893, the area was starting to recover from the real estate crash of 1888, and population growth reemerged. Even if material conditions had changed little, the city's boosters were becoming expert marketers. They could sell the "Land of Sunshine" in the middle of a drought; they could sell "health" during an epidemic; they could sell economic opportunity in a depression.⁴ Though the national economic order may have been on the verge of collapse, Los Angeles was one of the places where establishing a new order that protected the individual while still leveraging cooperation seemed like a realistic aim.

Plans to build new places that reconfigured space and the social order came from nearly everywhere. There were so many projects claiming to be real estate developments, in fact, that in 1903 progressive journalist William Schaeffle began publishing a monthly magazine, *The American Globe*, largely devoted to separating fraudulent real estate investments from legitimate ones. Schaeffle warned Angelenos about what he called "the fake building company epidemic."⁵ His exposés were just a few years late for those who took advantage of Richard Altshul's "Gilt-edged business and residential lots for sale" in 1896, but the *American Globe* was welcomed nonetheless.⁶

However frenetic, opportunistic, haphazard, or even corrupt Southland development was, it did not lack purpose.⁷ It is true that there was no town master plan, but this did not mean the city was growing without intention, and every private builder invoked a text that became, in

⁴Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990), 24-30.

⁵Wm. Schaeffle, ed., "The Fake Building Company Epidemic," *The American Globe*, Vol. VII, No. 2 (Jan. 1910): 9.

⁶Display Ad, *The Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (December 1896): 2. Schaeffle claimed more than 1 million magazines distributed during the life of *The American Globe*.

⁷See Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise – A California History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 133. Farmer argues that beginning with the real estate boom of the 1880s, Los Angeles County builders rejected the eastern model of urban growth in favor of a plan that was entirely different, "neither urban nor rural." This difference, interpreted as the illegibility of a non-eastern urban model, is one of the major causes of the general perception that Los Angeles was unplanned. See also Carey McWilliams, *California – the Great Exception* (New York: A.A. Wyn, 1949), 22. McWilliams, a key observer whose perceptions of Los Angeles framed scholarly work for decades, asserted that "by an accident, therefore, Los Angeles has become the first modern widely decentralized industrial city in America."

essence, the narrative within which investment and construction were framed. So if the whole of Los Angeles was not master planned, its individual “community” developments certainly were.⁸ Community builders henceforth determined the size and shape of homes, their orientations on lots, their exterior colors, and eventually the color of their inhabitants, as well.⁹

Los Angeles builders imagined their new territory to be unencumbered by previous tenants; if anything had been on this land before, what remained was but a faint and unreadable palimpsest. Now the built environment could appropriate any ideology; it could incorporate pleasant aesthetic themes from an imagined past (such as romantic Spanish Colonial architecture), or it could invent a fantasy future (as Abbot Kinney did in designing Venice of America). There was nothing substantial to be overcome or demolished because the material culture that was there was perceived by the newcomers to have only been episodic and temporary, anyway.

Drawing extensively from utopian and romantic literature, Los Angeles planners, promoters, developers, and residents transformed the area’s underdeveloped land by inventing new types and forms of urban spaces that both felt like utopia and shaped utopian strategies for social and political change. Los Angeles seemed to offer the perfect combination of emptiness and opportunity – land and freedom – that could be the foundation for a practical utopia contoured according to the science and aesthetic sense that signaled progressive modernity.

⁸Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 30.

⁹ Of course, community builders did not originate the idea of the color line in California neighborhoods. As Kevin Starr has pointed out, African Americans, Chinese, and Native Americans were denied the rights of citizenship under the original California state constitution, ratified in 1849. See Kevin Starr, *California, a History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 93. The color line, or more accurately, color lines, would configure neighborhoods in the state, and especially in Southern California even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against residential deed restrictions in 1967.

Like other colonizers, Los Angeles developers ignored existing social formations by claiming that no viable pre-Anglo material progress had ever existed before, and if utopian developers seemed to promote more retrograde rural economics and ideals, this was an illusion.¹⁰ California's rural vision was different from the antimodernism that gained traction throughout much of America and Europe; it did not imagine returning to an idyllic past. It did imagine the continuity of a racially homogeneous society, which appeared to draw from a romanticized history, but this new racial construct was a hallmark of its progressive modernity, not a tendency to look backward. The progressive discipline of city planning supported this ideal, and as it intensified, it platted a mental and physical landscape that promoted the proliferation of racially restrictive space, law, and custom. Informed by race and social science, community planning changed the peopling of Los Angeles, even when the specific projects planners advocated failed to materialize in the real world.¹¹

But the story of Los Angeles development is more than a tale of elite Anglo-Saxon interests eradicating indigenous societies by constructing a new Anglo imaginary. The Southland imagined community was new, to be sure, but when boosters organized to attract out-of-state laborers to the under-resourced Los Angeles area, they could only partially control the peopling of the territory.¹² Labor had to be attracted to the Los Angeles dream just as

¹⁰ See David N. Cassuto, *Dripping Dry: Literature, Politics, and Water in the Desert Southwest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 9-28, for a parallel discussion of how the myth of virgin land dovetailed with the Reclamation Act of 1902, bringing water to undeveloped western lands. For a discussion of erasure through the declaration of "pre-history," see Eviatar Zerubavel, "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past," *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 19, No 3 (1996): 283-299.

¹¹ The relationship between race and progressivism in Los Angeles was, as Douglas Flamming points out "singularly complex." In the mayoral election of 1906, the Los Angeles Woman Suffrage League (founded by the renowned progressive Caroline Severance) barred black women from the organization. At the Chicago Convention of the Progressive party in 1912, the "Negro Question" was eliminated as an issue of political discussion. See Douglas Flamming, "African-American and the Politics of Race in Progressive Era Los Angeles," in William Devereil and Tom Sitton, eds. *California Progressivism Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 203-223.

¹² See Victor Valle, *City of Industry: Genealogies of Power in Southern California* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 43. Valle discusses the role of the railroads in recruiting out of state residents to build colonies, factories, mines, and towns.

aggressively as capital, but creating an ideal home for both capitalists and workers was an inherently contradictory idea, and satisfying both constituencies would require maintaining a perilous balance between individualism and cooperation. This balancing act, while never completely successful, became the foundation of Southern California promotion.¹³

Even before U.S. annexation, California offered economic opportunities that could not be found in many other places. The great California “rushes,” gold and health in particular, had been attracting migrants and settlers since the 1830s.¹⁴ Through the 1880s, the state’s minerals and climate continued to draw immigrants to the state, as gold and oil stimulated population movement to Southern California, but the most important element attracting settlers to the area was its land, or more accurately, the ideas that potential immigrants had about California land. Consequently, myths about why land in Southern California was desirable (even desert land) took the foreground in promoting Los Angeles. Boosters claimed that uncongested land and arid weather would lengthen life; the ease and variety of agricultural production would create security and wealth; and the under-exploited condition of the land could be quickly transformed, affording more leisure than was possible anywhere else in the country. These were the creation myths for Los Angeles.

Successfully promoting myths about land necessitated the continual reinvention of the Los Angeles area. Not only did builders need to show perpetual progress, but the myths themselves were unsustainable and self-limiting. When the city grew there was more congestion; when urbanization and suburbanization spread, there was less agricultural land. Moreover, Anglo

¹³ Balancing this issue might have been more difficult had the state not been able to promote a new citriculture as both the alluring symbol of economic opportunity and the overarching framework to organize capitalists and workers who were new to Southern California. Future growers typically came to California as a part of a colony that had already purchased land – in a sense preparing the land for workers. See Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 39.

¹⁴ Glen Gendzel, “Not Just a Golden State: Three Anglo “Rushes” in the Making of Southern California, 1880-1920,” *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Winter 2008-2009): 349-368. Gendzel notes that the health rush, in particular, attracted an older and wealthier class of immigrants to California.

agricultural experience began to demonstrate that commercial-scale farming in Los Angeles was not feasible for all crops; the land of sunshine had its practical limitations and real deserts could not be so easily made to bloom (and certainly not without new sources of water). The growth of Los Angeles, then, became dependent on transferring the positive ideas about rural land to an increasingly urbanized metropolis. Planners and developers focused on the attributes of openness and opportunity, and so they imagined a city with open spaces; with rural enclaves immediately adjacent to urban markets. They imagined a sprawl connected by modern transportation lines and hubs, thus enabling landowning and commercial business within the same locale.¹⁵ They imagined garden homes that could bring the countryside to each individual. They envisioned residential community zones within the city. These could be zones that would bring neighborly cooperation, or even communalism, to an urban center.

Such combinations of natural and manmade attributes were rare in the material world, but could often be found in literature. Literature would become an important source of guidance for many who attempted to re-imagine space and social order in Southern California. Literary fiction was, in fact, among the most important of the multitude of intellectual forces that molded the way Los Angeles development was planned in the late nineteenth century. As scholars examine relationships between the literary and the material, they often identify the way cities are portrayed or revealed in novels, but the relationship between cities and literature is much more complex. “To understand a text,” Paul Ricoeur insists, “is at the same time to light up our own situation.”¹⁶ The situation of cities, I contend, is such that they sometimes are built from, rather than reflected in, literature; and Los Angeles was to a great extent built from books.

¹⁵Becky Nicolaides, “‘Where the Working Man is Welcomed’; Working Class Suburbs in Los Angeles, 1900 – 1940,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Nov., 1999): 517-559.

¹⁶ Paul Ricoeur, “The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text,” *Interpretive Social Science, A Reader*, Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 79.

By the end of the nineteenth century, planners and builders, like everyone else, were confronted with technologies that had to be managed in order to maintain a desirable society, for if new ideas were going to take hold, they would need to contribute to social progress.¹⁷ Where these ideas might come from, however, was often surprising, and in the years since the territory of Los Angeles was set on its development path, they have been obscured. The present study seeks not only to recover such ideas and their origins, but to identify the places where they remained vital, along with the locations where they have been misunderstood, or even erased.

Much of what was misunderstood in the Southland has been complicated by the fact that, even though many of its underlying intentions fit within a patchwork of American modernity, the outer forms that these intentions took often varied from other places that seemed to be rational sites for comparison. The commercial growth experience of Los Angeles, for example, complicated one conventional interpretation of urbanism, drawn from Lewis Mumford, that in America skyscrapers were introduced by developers as the dominant way to harness maximum profitability during a period of intense real estate speculation. This may have been true in other cities, but it was not the case in Los Angeles, where what Mumford called “profitable congestion” was achieved horizontally, not vertically.¹⁸

Because Los Angeles did not fit the typical city growth pattern, it often has been described as a non-urban or even anti-urban place. This study will demonstrate that such descriptions are misinterpretations. In spite of its lack of vertical growth, Los Angeles did achieve as much urban character as any other city. What may have been exceptional was the

¹⁷ Richard Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 152. Pells concludes that people assumed “an automatic connection between ideas and social policies.”

¹⁸ Lewis Mumford, introduction to *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture: 37 Essays from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present*, ed. by Lewis Mumford (New York: Reinhold Publishing, 1952), 20.

area's integration of rural and urban cultures, but the intention to build an American city was no less pronounced in Los Angeles than anywhere else in the nation.

Nor was Los Angeles development less planned, though whether we will see strategy and planning in the goals of community builders depends on where and how closely we look. As the motto for the Pacific Crude Oil & Refining Company professed in 1920, in California everyone should "Plan Your Work and Work Your Plan."¹⁹ We can find the power to plan and build Los Angeles, not just among oil men, boosters, media moguls, real estate developers, and politicians, where no one would be surprised it existed, but among writers, readers, gardeners, merchants, laborers, and farmers; women and men whom are often thought to be passive with regard to the dynamics of social relations, or irrelevant with regard to city planning. In fact, only if most of these constituencies are ignored, can a coherent case be made that Los Angeles was unplanned.

This study also will show that many among Los Angeles' elite planners had radical views about the nature of the social order that should exist in paradise. Within the elite moneyed class there was a diversity of interests: some successful real estate developers, like H. Gaylord Wilshire and John Randolph Haynes, were socialists.²⁰ Abbot Kinney was a follower of Henry George. It is my argument that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there were many planning and development activists who did not think of radical social and environmental transformation as oppositional to capitalism, but as interconnected aspects of an actively adapting capitalism that was evolving and progressing. I view such men and women as the American counterparts to Europe's "radical bourgeoisie," and like many of their European peers,

¹⁹ Advertisement, Pacific Crude Oil & Refining Company, in the Orange County Special Edition of the *Bi-Monthly Oil Digest & Oil News*, Vol. II, No. 1, (May 1, 1920), Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 32, Folder 13, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

²⁰While scholarship has increasingly blurred the separation among California's leftwing Progressives, conservative Socialists, and reformers, and the categorization of John Randolph Haynes, in particular, has been somewhat fluid, I follow Tom Sitton here, who notes that Haynes was "a self-avowed Christian socialist." See Tom Sitton, "John Randolph Haynes and the Left Wing of California Progressivism," in William Deverell and Tom Sitton, eds. *California Progressivism Revisited*, 16.

by the 1880s they were committed to advancing society by promoting public-private cooperation in industry, commerce, and the professions.²¹ Such cooperation banded together not only private- and public-enterprise, but political and social ideology as well. At the time, the dialogue within capitalism allowed for exchanges with non-capitalist theories to a much greater extent than it would in later generations. The exchange of social ideas is especially manifest in activities centered on developing land in Los Angeles; people and places (mostly white people and places) did show practical cooperation in areas where little dialogue at all is very likely today.

One reason that cooperation seemed viable here was, unlike in other places where the radical bourgeoisie might form a disaffected intelligentsia, in Los Angeles many such individuals continued to be active capitalists at the same time that they promoted radical ideas. The importance and legitimacy of these apparently contradictory expressions has usually been questioned by historians.²² I argue that many Los Angeles businessmen did much more than operate businesses, and, furthermore, they were sincere when professing ideas about radical social change. In truth, they did not internalize the same ideological inconsistencies that trouble scholars today.²³ Some important businessmen worked to overturn the very structure of competition. In fact, “businessman” may not be a useful category: at least with respect to the community builders and developers who influenced the nature of Los Angeles, business was neither the only, nor always the most important, dimension of their lives. In this era radicalism

²¹For a discussion of the European radical bourgeoisie see Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l'enseignement and the origins of the Third Republic 1866-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

²²Mansel G. Blackford, *The Politics of Business in California, 1890-1920* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977), 166.

²³ This is also true with respect to political literature. See Laura Browder, *Rousing the Nation: Radical Culture in Depression America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 32. Browder points out that radical leftists and conservative authors were often published in the same literary magazines.

and mainstream capitalism were not inherently polar opposites.²⁴ They could be, and often were, in conversation and negotiation. The business of real estate development was also the business of building new social forms for new social purposes.²⁵

The nature of real estate development in Los Angeles can be better understood by interrogating the terms under which urban and suburban space was produced. Social terms and conditions, informed by ideas originating within varied interest groups and the practical experiences of diverse communities of color, did not progress smoothly; change demanded struggle, and growth did not benefit all Angeleno space equally.²⁶ Interpreting the range of radical ideas that constitute the development of urban space is typically the province of urban planners or urban planning historians; it occasionally has been analyzed by intellectual and cultural historians, but usually only peripherally. I seek to connect radical ideas to a more mainstream geographic history, and assert that a new perspective about development, change, and continuity in Los Angeles will emerge by breaking down the linearity of the conventional place-narrative. By tracking the cultural eruptions of social ideas over time, and emphasizing the coeval construction of ideas and events, key influences that have remained hidden will be revealed. Change is never linear and uninterrupted, but occurs in fits and starts, and the goal of the current study is to reproduce this sense of transition and transformation more faithfully than would be possible using any other approach.

²⁴ For a countervailing perspective see Robert Gottlieb, et.al., *The Next Los Angeles: the Struggle for a Livable City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 11. Gottlieb emphasizes the separate movements of radicalism and the elites without noting the distinct overlap I discuss in the current study.

²⁵ M.V. Hartranft, "What Homeseekers Need," *The Western Empire Land-Banking and Home Securing Plan* (January 1911), 8. "The destiny of our nation rests in the landed proprietorship of the many, not of the few." This thirty page "social plan" is really an elaborate real estate advertising to sell land in Hartranft's planned Los Terrenitos colony in Tujunga. More detailed than most campaigns, but the same principles can be observed in display ads for real estate, for example, "Bungalow Land – is particularly for those who are appreciative of the naturally beautiful: people of a high plane of living, of thought and of conduct," *Los Angeles Herald*, Vol. 36, No. 213 (May 1909), page 7 advertisements, column 2.

²⁶ See literary theorist Art Berman for a discussion of the non-linear dynamic between ideas and events. Art Berman, *From the New Criticism to Deconstruction: The Reception of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 26.

The development of Los Angeles is, to paraphrase utopian Charles Weeks, about “intensive real estate culture and intensive human culture.”²⁷ Because the types and styles of these cultures were set in motion by the beliefs of early real estate developers, this study is a story about them, yet it is more about the literary forces that influenced them, the spaces in which they operated, and the places they created and named. In short, the origins and implications of peoples’ ideas, rather than the people themselves, are the most important subjects of this exploration.

These ideas created social imaginaries where race, gender, class, politics, land, and economic theories all aligned to form new, intentionally planned, places. This is the blueprint for place formation in every project this study will examine: the development of Llano del Rio, the Tujunga Little Landers, and the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony. These projects are, to borrow a phrase from historian Jay Winter, some of the “minor utopias” of Los Angeles – studying them will not create a new counter-narrative, but it will create a more complete narrative, and by shining a new light on the ways people with countervailing interests negotiated meaning as they constructed places, it will perhaps create a more grounded or fundamental understanding of the way places like Los Angeles developed.²⁸

I argue that the mechanisms of change, then as today, were often information technologies. But unlike today, when litterateurs are rarely expected to provide legitimate social critique, in this recent past the most useful information technology was often popular literature. Works of fiction enabled imagination and myth to enter the material world. This assertion, I

²⁷Charles Weeks’ 1925 editions of his poultry colony’s magazine were called *Intensive Agriculture and Intensive Human Culture*. I have paraphrased this title to shift it toward illuminating the relationship between culture and real estate development.

²⁸Jay Winter, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the 20th Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 1. Winter contrasts “minor utopias” to “major utopians,” such as Stalin and Hitler. Like Winter, I use the term to connote positive actionable ideas intended to bring about a better world.

suggest, is a methodological recovery; an attempt to understand historical narrative using cultural productions as both the tools and the objects of analysis.

There is also a project in recovering the social importance of utopian colonies, and all three of the minor utopias examined in this study fit that categorization. Most theorists on the left have dismissed these impermanent communities. The leftist argument, so aptly summarized by the early-twentieth-century Communist writer Mike Gold, contends that “these colonies take lots of precious material away from the firing line, which is in the cities, in the ranks of the class-conscious workers.”²⁹ Unfortunately, this interpretation has dominated academic thought, and has caused political, social, and cultural historians, who might otherwise have looked at utopian colonies as legitimate responses to American social problems, to view them as insignificant subjects for mainstream historical studies. Instead, scholars have tended only to consider colonies as separate or even fringe episodes of individual initiative – at most novel micro-histories with little to teach about society at large.

In the case of Los Angeles, where the geographic and social boundaries between city and utopian colony always have been quite blurry, the contention that utopias remained outside the social mainstream needs to be reevaluated. The development of so many utopian communities within the area of Southern California could not have been purely coincidental, and I argue that colonies were far more important to, and actually integrated into, Los Angeles’ past than has generally been credited. They were, moreover, emblematic of the way urban space was produced in the Southland more generally, and they were certainly coherent examples of social cooperation. It is time to re-write them into a history of Los Angeles.

²⁹Mike Gold, “A Little Bit of Millennium,” *Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*, ed. by Michael Folsom (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 72, originally published in *The Liberator*, March 1921.

Specifically, this study will expose the way Los Angeles places were defined by discourses about racial, gendered, and class-based conceptions of social order. It will explore the way that real property was manipulated by developers in order to recreate the social boundaries of space, thus blurring the distinction between the ideal and the material. “Property,” according to some legal theorists, “is not just about individuals exercising control over external things and (therefore) over others. Rather, property concerns individuals *and* communities: how they are formed, how they live together, and how they use their resources. On this understanding, property brings into play an entire social order.”³⁰ Race and real estate were equally prominent and important subjects to Los Angeles boosters.³¹

The way property was imagined did contour social order in Los Angeles, and it is critical to note that even the radical dimensions of imagined alternative social orders never overcame most nineteenth-century social conventions. Though various groups accepted as politically legitimate a range of possibilities about gender and class equality, very few social movements, organizations, or interest groups, even if they promoted radical change, advocated racial equality. Neither the Marxist science of socialists who saw social progression as natural and inevitable, nor the more Lamarckian ideas of Nationalists and feminists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, ever envisioned a future community where society was anything other than an Anglo-dominated structure.

The lack of interest in the “race problem” we observe among radicals is intrinsic to the late-nineteenth-century vision of utopia. Southern Californians did not invent this vision of the future, but they appropriated it for their geographic needs: Southland utopia was imagined to be

³⁰Margaret Davies, *Property: Meanings, Histories, Theories* (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.

³¹ William Deverell and Douglas Flammig, “Race, Rhetoric, and Regional Identity: Boosting Los Angeles, 1880-1930,” in *Power and Place in the North American West*, ed. by Richard White and John M. Findlay (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), 117.

possible only in a homogeneous society; utopia was incompatible with racial diversity and multiculturalism. During the period of this study, none of the utopian planners who worked to redevelop the physical geography of paradise envisioned racial equality within its borders.³² And of all the ideological and practical builders of a future Los Angeles, it was not the utopians or socialists, but only the more down-to-earth National Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners who advocated racial integration, inclusiveness, and equality.³³ The Union and its Los Angeles offshoot, The Mutual Organization League,³⁴ would remain the only important Southland advocates for racial equality until the communists took up this struggle in the early 1920s.³⁵ Still, these examples do demonstrate that some builders and social activists did address the race issue; the reason that utopian colonists did not will become clear as I examine the three Southland colonies selected for this study.

Utopianism, with regard to race, reflected the segregation that dominated the practice of cooperation during the era. But unlike utopianism, cooperation did sometimes discursively break racial barriers – at least in other parts of the nation. In the January 1921 edition of *Co-operation* magazine, the Soo Cooperative Mercantile Association of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan called its

³² David Roediger has argued that the ideals of labor republicanism intrinsically excluded African Americans from the producing class, and I assert that as Los Angeles developed within a political framework of labor republicanism, this inherent exclusion of African Americans gained momentum. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 44.

³³ *Constitution of the National Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America*, (May 1, 1905) “Principles,” Miscellaneous: “We recognize that the interests of all classes of labor are identical, regardless of occupation, nationality, religion, or color, for a wrong done to one is a wrong done to all.”

³⁴ The Mutual Organization League, in fact, was developed to attract African Americans to labor unions and combined with the Central Labor Councils to build an interracial workers front that tried to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. See Jeffrey D. Stansbury, “Organized Workers and the Making of Los Angeles, 1890 – 1915,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2008, 301. The MOL is also discussed in the *American Federationist*, the monthly magazine of the American Federation of Labor (see July 1911).

³⁵ It is also true that the United Lodge of Theosophists, since their inception in 1909, professed the credo (as had their parent organization since 1875) that they were open to “all those who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization.” Pamphlet, *United Lodge of Theosophists* (Los Angeles, 1923), Box 88, Folder 19, Don Meadows Papers, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

association a “melting pot,” and noted a membership of “English, French, Italians, Germans, Swedes, Finns, Norwegians, Danes, Scotch, Jews, Negros, and other Americans.”³⁶ Still, promoting the idea of integrated cooperatives was even unusual within the Co-operative League of America, and almost never noted in Los Angeles. In a geographic space perceived to be as easily malleable as Southern California, collaboration did seem to offer a hopeful way forward, but it was a hope that could only be expressed realistically by white producers, distributors, and consumers.

It was also the case that some cooperation in California foreshadowed the government-private sector alliances of the New Deal era, particularly with regard to real estate and homes. In 1921, for example, California implemented a federally financed veterans’ home loan program to help returning World War I soldiers purchase homes and farms. The amounts loaned directly to California residents by the Federal government under this program exceeded the amounts loaned to the entire rest of the nation until 1961.³⁷ While a bill to offer state-financed housing for urban, low income families failed in the California state legislature in 1921, its scope was completely intact in the 1921 Cal-Vet program.³⁸ Perhaps more so than in other places, in California homes had always been social and political sites. Social struggle, resistance, and innovative ideas about social change tended to center, especially in Los Angeles, around “dwellings.” When they rejected the public financing of homes for all needy citizens, but affirmed such public democracy for those who had served their nation in wartime, Californians may not yet have agreed to a more inclusive categorization of the “worthy poor,” but they were beginning to accept a cooperative

³⁶ “The Melting Pot,” *Co-operation*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (January 1921), 10.

³⁷ Edward Rada, *The Cal-Vet Program: a Study of State Financed Housing in California* (Los Angeles: Real Estate Study Program, University of California Los Angeles, 1962), xiii.

³⁸ The California Veterans Welfare Act (Chap. 590), which enabled the Cal-Vet program was also intended to establish agricultural colonies for veterans, but failed to initiate any because there was little interest. See Edith Elmer Wood, PhD, *Recent Trends in American Housing* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1931), 254.

alliance between the private sector and government. In 1921, California was one of the few such cooperative states in the nation where this was true.

Cooperation, however, seemed to have meant something different in California than in the rest of the nation. In the case of the citrus industry, such broad boundaries led to great success. But, while in 1934 a representative of the Cooperative League of America could remark that “within the national movement there are over 2,100 banking societies owned by the members, 1,600 farmers’ producing cooperatives, 900 other societies engaged in bakeries, mill supplies, insurance, medical care, electrical supplies, and numerous other services; also over 1,500 gasoline cooperatives,” he also commented that nowhere besides California had he ever “found a place in all the country where so many undertakings which are not cooperative, parade under that name.”³⁹ California undoubtedly had developed its own discursive terrain for the idea of cooperation, but if the state’s version and language seemed to be unique, it was also true that this may not always have benefited producers and consumers in the way that cooperatives were expected to elsewhere.

Cooperation, utopianism, and mainstream capitalism interacted routinely in Southern California, though most scholars who explore American utopianism do not observe this relationship. They tend to concentrate on movements and experiments that expressly attempted to separate themselves from their contemporary social order. In fact, Robert Hine, whose foundational 1953 work, *California’s Utopian Colonies* is the cornerstone on which all studies of California’s utopias are built, identified “withdrawal” from society as “an important element in the definition” of a utopian colony.⁴⁰ Hine contends that by establishing this important boundary

³⁹ “Co-operative League Head Arrives for Conferences,” *Upton Sinclair’s EPIC News*, vol. 1 – no. 31, Los Angeles, (December 24, 1934):1, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

⁴⁰ Robert V. Hine, *California’s Utopian Colonies* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1953), 5.

it is possible to segregate utopian colonies from other cooperative ventures and, hence, examine them as a separate subject. In my work, two colonies overlap with Hine's utopian cluster; the Tujunga Little Landers and Llano del Rio. Neither of these colonies, I will argue, truly separated themselves from the capitalist economic system or social order that surrounded them, but, rather, interacted with it quite dynamically. The distance between utopian colonies and California cooperation may not have been as great as was once imagined.

Ever since Carey McWilliams first wrote *Southern California: An Island On the Land* in 1946, historians have commented about what seems to be the area's special relationship with utopianism.⁴¹ Typically, scholars portray experimental communities as places that are located outside the normative frame of American society and most certainly beyond the boundaries of capitalist economics. My study focuses more on the observation that the members of many radical utopian experiments conceived themselves to be part of the larger Los Angeles community rather than isolated from it. I certainly do not argue that utopianism professed a capitalist economic system as the preferred future, but I do contend that what it did seem to profess was not as far removed from capitalism as scholars and critics think. Moreover, capitalism and utopianism shared certain foundations: both drank from the same wellspring of literature, mythology, and modern scientific ideas.

Two of the utopian colonies I explore in the current study, the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony and the Tujunga Little Landers, have only occasionally been the subjects of California scholarship, and when they have been analyzed they generally have been perceived to be examples of a national – in fact, international – trend to deal with industrialization and economic

⁴¹ See Robert Hine, op. cit.; Spencer Olin, *Post-Suburban California: the Transformation of Orange County Since World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*; and Jeremiah Axelrod, *Inventing Autopia: Dreams and Visions of the Modern Metropolis in Jazz Age Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

turmoil (and especially unemployment) through “intensive,” (small farm) agriculture.⁴² I do not disagree that these colonies were expressions of national movements, but I examine Weeks and the Tujunga Little Landers through a slightly different lens; I magnify what was specifically Southern Californian about them, rather than how they fit the times and nation more broadly.

All three utopian colonies originated, reached their peaks, and for all intents and purposes collapsed between 1911 and 1929. Still, I see them as consistent expressions of a community-building imaginary that began as a response to economic and social changes that can be traced to the events of 1893. Consequently, this study is organized within two chronological points: the financial collapse of 1893 and the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929. These points mark transformations in what Los Angeles developers perceived as the feasibility of governmental and private-sector initiatives promoting radical change in the social order; transformations that were brought about because of drastic changes in economic conditions on the ground.

While I reject the assertion that this period was entirely economically determined, economic conditions certainly did play a role in triggering cultural change, and if there is one stand-out phenomenon that both constitutes and distinguishes this era, it is the ubiquity of cooperative ideas – from workers’ cooperation, to cooperative living, to producers’ cooperatives, and even combinations of all three. That such cooperation may not really have represented anything revolutionary is certainly arguable, and it is also true that cooperation, as such, was not a unique California trope, but, rather, part of a national populist and capitalist dialogue. On the other hand, this study will illuminate a degree of exceptionalism in the type of cooperation that emerged in California. The state’s unconventional forms of agriculture, lack of an historic manufacturing sector, the perceived newness of its communities, and the need to guarantee

⁴² See Dona Brown, *Back to the Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011). Brown also notes not only the vast literary influence on the back-to-the-land movement, but the substantial participation of writers in these colonies, as well.

access to municipal resources like water combined to create unusual forms of cooperation throughout the late nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century.⁴³

One historian of the late twentieth century concluded that 1929 was a critical year because he believed that the date “marked the end of dormancy for the radical movement in California and was the starting point for a radical renaissance.”⁴⁴ My study contends that this period was anything but dormant, yet the end date is still an important conceptual break: It marks the end of an idea-intensive era of cooperation that survived the First World War, but was rendered moot by the change in government-private sector power relations brought about by the Depression. The New Deal, in effect, appropriated the type of cooperation that had been stimulating development in Southern California since the late nineteenth century.

It is far more common to study the radicalism that marked the 1930s, and, in fact, through the Popular Front, radicalism interacted with the mainstream in that decade also. But my contention is that this earlier period stands on its own as a unique era when radical imaginaries interacted with mainstream culture in a more dialectic way. Radical imaginaries in this early period also acted on a different front; they took hold most noticeably on the “home” front. There was, at least through most of the period, simply a less strident distinction between legitimate political or social discourse and what was outside the pale.

This study will explore some utopian adventures that reached their peaks after 1929, such as Mankind United, Upton Sinclair’s EPIC, and the Utopian Society of America, to be sure, but the purpose of bringing these examples into conversation with the period 1893 to 1929 is to

⁴³ While municipal ownership of water would not come to fruition for another fifteen to twenty years, in the 1896 Los Angeles mayoral election, Jules Martin, running on the Republican City Ticket, announced that “the Republican Party of this city not only demands the absolute ownership by the City of its water system, but the FREE distribution of water to the consumer.” Brochure, “1896 Republican City Ticket,” California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860-1990, CTP Box 6, Folder 5, Oviatt Library Special Collections, California State University, Northridge.

⁴⁴ Ralph Edward Shaffer, “Radicalism in California, 1869-1929,” unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1962, viii.

illuminate the way specific radical ideas that are emblematic of the earlier era survived and persisted in different forms. Furthermore, the political platform of EPIC, which became a factor in California during December of 1933, exemplified the difference between this earlier phase of private sector cooperation and the new structures that emerged during the 1930s, thus suggesting the terminal year for the present study's analytical frame.

In spite of its exceptionalism, Los Angeles is and always has been part of a larger global network. The human connections between Southern California and other places are obvious; what remains to be understood, then, are intellectual connections. Consequently, my theoretical framework will straddle local and global contexts to look for the migration and transformation of ideas as they were expressed within and beyond Los Angeles. This study touches the edges of many academic disciplines and cuts across a range of established literatures in several fields in part because I need to theorize how and why the commercial and residential projects of the early Los Angeles real estate developers were hinged on ideas that came from popular literature. If the history of “radical L.A.” has usually been conceived as a history of labor struggle, this study demonstrates that important dimensions of radicalism also existed in other venues where we do not normally look for them.⁴⁵ It challenges the conventional idea that real estate development was simply a mechanism for capitalist profit by positing that such attempts to build better communities were also “ethical” responses to reading – to literary subjectivity.⁴⁶ Within this context, many developers consciously built to gain a social order as much as to gain a profit.

My analytical framework has drawn from theorists who contribute to discourses in cultural studies, literary theory, and urban planning, but ultimately I settled on an approach

⁴⁵ See Errol Wayne Stevens, *Radical L.A. – From Coxey's Army to the Watts Riots, 1894-1965* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009). Stevens' twelve chapters are about evenly divided between those dealing exclusively with labor and politics outside of labor, but no cultural “radicalism” is prominently discussed..

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Karnicky, *Contemporary Fiction and the Ethics of Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 2.

aimed at understanding the way fictional narrative is used to engage in material transformation. Such narratives were useful to Los Angeles boosters who sought legitimacy by claiming continuity between a territorial past and a radically different future. Romantic and utopian literature, for example, aimed at doing precisely this, and the fact that it flourished not only in California, but globally in the late nineteenth century, locates this literature as an essential part of the new technologies Rebecca Solnit has concluded were “instruments for annihilating time and space.”⁴⁷ This, in effect, is what enables futuristic literary images to enter the present material world. “The hardest thing to do,” according to Los Angeles novelist Walter Mosley, “is to break the chains of reality and go beyond into a world of your own creation.”⁴⁸ Yet this is exactly what utopian literature enabled community builders to do. Still, if these literary efforts were an attempt to mitigate the social confusion brought about by new technology and to bring new solutions to social problems, it is notable that literature itself became a new technology that fed into a cycle of social disruption and alienation.⁴⁹

The utopias this study will explore are part of a system of ideas that has been almost entirely forgotten (or ignored), though it has been integral to establishing a characterization (or mischaracterization) of Los Angeles that still is represented in popular culture across the globe. My claim that literature and communities are part of a system of ideas challenges a view posited by some historians that American utopianism shifted from community development to literary

⁴⁷ Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 4.

⁴⁸ Walter Mosley, “Black to the Future,” in *Envisioning the Future: Science Fiction and the Net Millennium*, ed. by Marleen S. Barr (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 204.

⁴⁹ See Zygmunt Bauman, who writes that utopian literature, in particular, is important in this regard and contends that, “social life cannot in fact be understood unless due attention is paid to the immense role played by utopia.” Utopias, according to Bauman “cause the reaction of the future with the present, and thereby produce the compound known as human history. Zygmunt Bauman, *Socialism: The Active Utopia* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1976), 12.

production in the late-nineteenth century.⁵⁰ I maintain that this interpretation employs too narrow a definition of what constitutes a utopian community, and overstates the literary transformation, which had more to do with the effects of publishing and reading-habit changes in the late-nineteenth century than with a sublimation of practical utopianism into literary imagination.

The main argument of my research is presented in five thematic chapters, each of which invokes a construction site metaphor. Chapter One explores how historical imagination informed place-making in Los Angeles. Both past and future were reinvented so that propositions for buildings, industries, and organizations would not only fit present-day needs, but seem to be natural and continuous adaptations of what the land had always been. The chapter examines the mythologies invented by early boosters and the literature that influenced the dreams of developers by exploring the way that real estate developers like Henry Gaylord Wilshire, one of the city's "millionaire socialists," envisioned urban landscape, homes, and politics. These millionaire socialists acted out a form of utopianism that made the reinvention of space seem natural, inevitable, and desirable. Central to creating utopia in Los Angeles was the nearly universal assumption that an ideal place could only be achieved in a racially homogeneous

⁵⁰ See Howard Segal, *Technological Utopianism in American Culture* (Syracuse: Syracuse State University, 2005) for an argument premised on the hypothesis that utopianism (and especially what he calls "technological utopianism") shifted from the founding of colonies to the production of literature. Historian Lawrence Levine reviewed the first edition of Segal's book in 1985 and seems to support this premise, though he criticized Segal's argument in many other areas. I would counter the argument by drawing from Kenneth Roemer's observation that utopian literature was published at a fairly constant rate during the period after Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516 through Bellamy's *Looking Backward* in 1888 (when Segal contends that the main expression of utopianism was the founding of colonies). Though the production was not prolific (about one novel a year), publishing books of any type was relatively rare during this era, and, while our historical narrative does remember the colonization efforts of Fourier, Cabot, Owens, Noyes, the Shakers, and the Mormons, the founding of alternative cities was not particularly prolific either. On the other hand, printing and paper technologies in the mid-to-late nineteenth century enabled the inexpensive production and reprinting of books, public education increased the size of the reading population, and the financial success of *Looking Backward* stimulated authors to emulate the utopian form. Writers from William Dean Howells to Theodore Herzl openly acknowledged that they promoted social ideas in the form of utopian fiction because, based on Bellamy's success, they thought more people would read such novels. This, rather than a shift in the nature of utopian output, accounts for the misconception that utopianism was more literary than actual in the late-nineteenth century.

Anglo-Saxon environment. Within the framework of American capitalism, literary, legal, and scientific formulations all influenced the way the nascent metropolis of Los Angeles would develop.

Chapter Two analyzes how the ideas for this ideal community crystallized into housing ordinances and laws that established the boundaries for social and spatial development. Restrictive covenants, zoning ordinances, and California's Alien Land Law imparted character and shape to this territory, which was performatively reinforced through grand pageants that reenacted a racist procession of Southern California history. As in all settler colonies, local, state, federal law, and popular customs evolved to establish legally authorized mechanisms enforcing social order. Through these legal constructs and recurring public displays, whiteness and color were spatially defined, and people of color, whether native-born Americans or immigrants, were erased from the visible social fabric of Los Angeles. Even attempts to create alternative social and economic worlds never transgressed the color lines that bounded space.

Chapter Three explores ideas that lay beneath the surface of community plans: the political, social, and economic ideas that informed real estate development projects. This chapter argues that many of the ideas driving real estate development in Los Angeles had literary roots in utopian and romantic regional fiction. As with all such literature, romance and utopian novels could be interpreted to advocate progressive social change or to prophesize a return to an older path that proponents imagined had been morally superior. Reader response to literature could suggest a different future or reinforce the existing social hierarchy.

Utopianism, in particular, resonated more profoundly in Southern California than in other places. This phenomenon manifested not only in the era's flourishing intentional communities, but also in mainstream political, social, and business ideas where utopianism seemed practical. In 1934, after having worked on Upton Sinclair's failed campaign for California's Democratic gubernatorial nomination, former Edward Bellamy follower Richard Otto declared that "Until we become idealists and Utopians we cannot become effective as practical people. Until we become capable in our thought and action upon human affairs, of looking beyond details and seeing life as a whole in the light of some orderly conception of what organized human action might make of it, our politics will be a mere groping in darkness and our work for social improvement a futility."⁵¹ This is a philosophy that fit an imagined California landscape precisely, and not least of all because utopianism – especially popular utopian literature – declared a modern, racially homogeneous and Anglo future.

Chapter Four interprets the way utopian ideas were used in the material world by analyzing the interaction of utopian colony founders, who I argue were radical real estate developers, with conservative centers of power in Los Angeles. By examining the connection between the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, other area boosters, and radical developers, the study will provide insight into the ways that disparate interest groups were able to reconcile seemingly contradictory social programs. If millionaire socialists can be explained away as eccentrics whose wealth provided them the freedom to advocate radical social change, there is more complexity in what seem to be alliances between arch-conservative groups like the chamber of commerce and utopian cooperatives like the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony. But in the final analysis, each group thought it could create a model that would have far-reaching

⁵¹ Richard Otto, "Quo Vadis?," *Upton Sinclair's EPIC News* (Vol. 1—No. 29, December 10, 1934), 1, Box 4, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

significance to the development of Los Angeles by improving the area's attractiveness and reputation.⁵²

Chapter Five turns to the aesthetic dimension of community building by examining the way Los Angeles looked to residents and outsiders. This part of my argument asserts that residential and commercial architectural styles, which form the facades of the Southland's built environment, are packed with hidden social meaning. Even without master plans, Los Angeles and its "satellite cities" express social meanings through design.⁵³ These meanings are often reproduced when visual media like movies transmit them nationally and even globally. Early impressions of Los Angeles may have been based largely on promotional literature and tourist stories, but when the movie industry gained a foothold in the Southland, popular culture was able to present landscapes, homes, building exteriors, and people in ways that seemed to offer transparently realistic visions of the area to the rest of the world. Los Angeles developers, inspired by literary themes resonating in the Southland, promoted building styles that projected precise social ideas, and several of these became popular in distant places – though they did not necessarily convey the same symbolic meaning outside of Southern California. Bungalows and courtyard cottages, for example, were designs intended to bring inexpensive, but elegant, homes to the mass market and they became emblematic of Southern California. The best types of courtyard cottages, in particular, enacted a new and more communal theory of living. By

⁵² Sociologist Laura Barraclough has argued that by promoting agricultural colonies boosters were able to demonstrate that Los Angeles was a rural-city, a quality of life that many immigrants found attractive. I agree with this assertion, but add that the legacy of recent frontier expansion made the idea of rural-city particularly viable in the West. The lack-of-history myth that Los Angeles inherited prepared the soil for community development – the schools, governance, and leisure activities of agricultural colonies were infused with an "individual communalism" that never disguised its utopian origins or planned future. In fact, utopian impulses would continue to fuel California movements and enterprises throughout the mid-twentieth century – in part because they departed from doctrinaire ideologies like capitalism, communism, and socialism by working cooperatively across several economic and social systems simultaneously. See Laura R. Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley: Rural Landscapes, Urban Development, and White Privilege* (Athens & London: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

⁵³ Barbara Rubin, "A Chronology of Architecture in Los Angeles," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 1977), 521-537.

emphasizing these novel housing styles, Los Angeles developers imagined a housing egalitarianism that was unusual during the era.

Los Angeles was undoubtedly part of a substantial interconnectedness that brought the thrusts of Western modernity to many different locations, but this study will show that Southern California was not merely a receptacle for ideas developed elsewhere. Rather, it was a global model to which other projects turned for guidance.⁵⁴ Southern California presented an environment where ideas that were often polarized elsewhere could be in dialogue. It demonstrated a new material relationship between literature and property. It nurtured a new type of cooperative competition; a new type of social real-estate development; a new way to imagine geography. That such “newness” was not necessarily better for a great deal of humanity goes without saying; but what still remains to be understood is how the often shifting and indirect relationships among literature, politics, land, race, class, and gender functioned to define both the exclusion and openness that characterized the nature of place in early Los Angeles and continue to covertly demarcate the limits of redevelopment in the city today.

Historians have long noted Southern California’s location as a site for “race making,” and race entails one important dimension of the area’s community building endeavors, but there were other important dimensions as well. In many other social areas Los Angeles planners, guided by radical literature, attempted to rupture the American conventions of place-making.⁵⁵ In fact, innovations in the city’s early social movements, industries, institutions, and built spaces prefigured the experimental social ordering that would become the hallmark of modern cities in the twentieth century. That manifestations of utopian ideals coexisted with racism and

⁵⁴ See Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 108, for examples of how California eugenics legislation was studied by the Nazi government in post-1933 Germany.

⁵⁵ Stephanie Lewthwaite, “Race, Place, and Ethnicity in the Progressive Era,” William Deverell and Greg Hise, eds., *A Companion to Los Angeles* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 53.

influenced the contingent development of an inchoate Southland may not be exceptional at all, but in fact be emblematic of capitalist, and especially American, modernity.

Finally, this study will demonstrate that even when capitalism and socialism were commonly perceived to be political bipolarities, through the implicit contexts invoked by Los Angeles real estate developers and community builders, these social ideas continued to intersect at the locations of people's homes. But then again, as I will argue, radicals and real estate developers may not have been such strange bedfellows after all, for in the final analysis both occupations dreamt of and tried to build ideal physical worlds. Los Angeles may never have achieved its imagined status as the Garden of Eden, but well into the twentieth century it did present examples of a cooperative commonwealth that would be used to transform urban and agricultural spaces, public and private alliances, even housing and community aesthetics, not only in America, but throughout the developed and developing world.

CHAPTER 1: PLANNING AND DRAFTING

1893 was a big year for envisioning a future America. Architect Daniel Burnham, on behalf of The World's Columbian Exposition planners, co-designed and built Chicago's White City, a fantasy vision of the nation's technological, aesthetic, and imperial future. Burnham would later propose a plan to redesign the entire city of Chicago according to the principles of the City Beautiful movement – a design for cities that shared many goals with Ebenezer Howard's English Garden Cities architecture. Howard, in turn, an amateur architect and city planner, envisioned the perfect city to be one he imagined when he read Edward Bellamy's 1888 best selling utopian novel, *Looking Backward*.¹ That ideas from literature might inspire practical building was not unusual in the nineteenth century.² Fictional literature was not as distinct from non-fiction as it is today, and eloquent ideas were often thought to guide people in their daily lives. The ability to envision a better community almost seemed to demand a connection to literary examples of morality, since this was where such profound ideas would have been most likely to have been found.

Design, like literature, may not always have made its way into the material world, as architectural journalists Greg Goldin and Sam Lubell demonstrated in their recent study, *Never Built Los Angeles*, which accompanied a museum exhibit at the Getty highlighting Southern California projects planned, modeled, but never actually constructed.³ These architectural visions tell us about what people believed might have been achievable in Los Angeles and may be just as

¹ Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1902).

² In fact, White City historian James Gilbert, drawing from James Schmeichen, points to the Victorian idea of “associational functionalism,” which, he contends, “promised that good behavior would result from exposure to good ideas.” James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 19.

³ Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin, *Los Angeles Never Built* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2013).

important to tradition and memory as buildings that were constructed and since demolished (as most buildings in Los Angeles were). In a sense they represent texts – an individualized historical reader-response to decades of Los Angeles boosterism, mythology, and critique. With the passage of time, it is not bricks and mortar that remain in the material world, but only our interpretations of what meaning such structures might have had. While much of the present study concerns itself with how people read or interpreted the built environment that did surround them, it will also explore another dimension of Los Angeles reality – the mythological characterization of what the area might become, which was constituted in large part from booster literature, travelogues, and novels.

Many observers over the years have claimed that Los Angeles community builders have lacked imagination or purpose. It is often asserted, in fact, that Los Angeles is not very innovative, only haphazardly and even reluctantly entering modernity.⁴ I argue against these common misconceptions, asserting that Los Angeles did have intention; emerging from it were designs of houses, businesses, roads, and public spaces that promoted specific changes to the social order and inhibited others. In 1926 Architect A. C. Martin, who built many practical Orange and Los Angeles County buildings, proposed an elegant swim club in Los Angeles modeled after an Egyptian temple. Egyptian form may have simply reflected popular interest in Howard Carter's uncovering of King Tut's tomb in 1922, or the release of Cecil B. DeMille's *Ten Commandments* in 1923, but it also may have been intended to materialize Los Angeles in a visual lineage of imperial place-making. In either case, the association of the city with Pharaohs, Pyramids, and temples had the effect of the latter. Empires and houses, in fact, were often

⁴ According to Lubell and Goldin, "Los Angeles lacks the grand gestures of urban innovation." It is, these journalists insist, "a reluctant city whose institutions, citizens, politics, and infrastructure, not to mention its sheer size, have often undermined inspired urban schemes." Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin, *Never Built Los Angeles*, 28.

conjoined in the enterprises of the area's real estate developers, though some empires never transitioned from paper to masonry.

While some Los Angeles builders imagined empires, others were more concerned with where the laborers who built empires would live. In 1924 well known architect Rudolph Schindler proposed an entire utopian socialist city for Los Angeles' radical lawyer Job Harriman, to be built in the desert outside of L.A. Harriman had earlier founded the socialist community of Llano del Rio, which had since moved to Louisiana, and he had even attempted (though it never came to fruition) to found a cotton-commune at Lake Elsinore.⁵ Schindler's surviving architectural drawings illustrate a detailed plan for a community center, common playgrounds, housing, shops, storage, aqueducts, and roads. By drawing from mainstream capitalist builders' belief that the perception of the desert around the edges of Los Angeles could influence what the center might become, Schindler and Harriman became resolute in their plans to construct a socialist enterprise in a place where it could interact with Los Angeles' material culture.

Throughout his architectural career Schindler continued to concentrate on design enterprises that were intended to solve housing problems, responding to the Roosevelt administration's call for low-cost housing proposals under the Subsistence Homesteads division of the Department of Interior in 1933. He designed individualized and efficient homes that have come to be known as "Schindler Shelters," which, according to Lubell and Goldin, "were low-cost, flexible, mass-produced units intended for Los Angeles and beyond."⁶

⁵ See Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* for a discussion of Harriman's colony at Llano del Rio. Harriman's failed effort at Lake Elsinore has never really been studied, but there are existent display ads in newspapers that document his recruiting efforts.

⁶ See Lubell's and Goldin's discussion of the building materials and architectural form Schindler was proposing. Schindler wanted to build with concrete and steel frames, which were going to be more durable and, he maintained, less expensive. Lubell and Goldin, 142.

Schindler, drawing from a utopian principle that sought a balance between capitalist individualism and socialist cooperation, claimed his system would avoid the cookie cutter sameness of similar types of low-cost housing. Years after he first proposed the shelters, he would explain that, “unless a personal relation can be established between a house and occupant, both will become meaningless cogs in a social machine without cultural possibilities.”⁷ Schindler proposed these houses to government agencies and builders during the 1930s and 1940s, but was never able to convince either the public or private sector to implement these elegant egalitarian designs.

Though city planning may not ever have reached the levels that might classify Los Angeles as a modern “planned community,” architects and community builders often developed master plans for this supposedly unplanned territory – never fully implemented, but not unimagined.⁸ These ideas were much more than failed projects. They demonstrate that architects, community builders, and real estate developers were doing more than haphazardly locating the largest possible developments on whatever land was available. They were indeed thinking about how physical space might solve social problems, and what was perceived by some as the blank canvas of Los Angeles appeared to be a place where social experimentation could be feasible.

In 1907, in fact, Charles Mulford Robinson proposed a City Beautiful plan – an indirect descendent of a vision derived from Edward Bellamy’s 1887 novel *Looking Backward*.⁹ In a

⁷ Rudolph M. Schindler, “Prefabrication Vocabulary,” *California Arts and Architecture* 60 (June 1943), 32-33, cited in Jin-Ho Park, “An Integral Approach to Design Strategies and Construction Systems: R.M. Schindler’s ‘Schindler Shelters,’” *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Nov., 2004): 29-38.

⁸ Lubell and Goldin., 48.

⁹After awakening from a 113 year trance, Julian West, the protagonist of Bellamy’s fiction, observes the streets of his hometown, Boston: “Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller inclosures [sic], stretched in every direction. Every quarter contained large open squares filled with trees, among which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late afternoon sun. Public buildings of a colossal size and an architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on

report called “Los Angeles, California: The City Beautiful,” which was summarized in the December 1, 1907 *Los Angeles Times*, Robinson appealed to capitalists and the masses, declaring that “with you, already the tourist metropolis of the country, the indirect profit through the attraction and retention of outsiders is certain and enormous.”¹⁰ The facades of the city, then, which were to be centered on a grand concourse that would connect “the heart of the city with a central railroad station to be shared in common by all the steam roads entering here,” would serve the purpose of attracting capital and labor – as had all the city’s promotional efforts since the late nineteenth century. In this, the “artistic public buildings,” arcades, lighting, water systems, terraced gardens, and proposed public agricultural park would connect utopian form with the human capital needed to build and maintain cities. The death blow to Robinson’s plan was finally delivered in 1925, when Los Angeles voters used their well tested initiative process to divest the city planning commission of all power to initiate civil design.¹¹ Many other grand plans were proposed throughout the decades, including Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1925 submission to redesign the Los Angeles Civic Center (which novelist Anais Nin proclaimed could have made Los Angeles “the most beautiful city in the world”), but all would fail to materialize on the ground.¹²

every side.” Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887, 1888* (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), 30. Recalling the nineteenth century, Bellamy’s twentieth century character asserts, “the cities of that period were rather shabby affairs. If you had the taste to make them splendid, which I would not be so rude as to question, the general poverty resulting from your extraordinary industrial system would not have given you the means.” (ibid.) This, in summary, expresses the connection between architecture and human uplift that Ebenezer Howard and later the City Beautiful movement followed.

¹⁰ “Grand Concourse Dominant Idea in Rare Vision of City Beautiful,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 1, 1907, pg. 1-4.

¹¹ Lubell and Goldin, 48. It is ironic that what began as a progressive effort to improve mass democracy in California, the initiative, referendum, and recall process championed by Los Angeles socialist John Randolph Haynes in the 1890s, would often be used to stifle what could have been progressive government projects, like city planning.

¹² Cited in Lubell and Goldin, 52.

It is less important that these imaginaries were never built than the fact that people perceived Los Angeles to be an area where communities could be planned. Throughout the history of city planning and real estate development in Los Angeles, architects like George Wyman, Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Charles Mulford Robinson attempted to construct a utopian form within capitalism. Believing that an improved home would lead to an improved person, these designers saw potential social benefits in new construction that would invent a new type of place.¹³

This could be either a Californian place or a Los Angeles place – for the two were not always identical. In a 1927 article, Pasadena’s *California Southland* magazine editors asserted that, at least as it concerned home building, they knew what a California place was; they could define a Californian style. “In architecture’s style there is no mistaking the word: it means design originating on the soil, adapted to conditions of life in this climate as observed by trained architects well versed, not only in architecture of other countries, but cognizant of California’s demands and privileges.”¹⁴ *California Southland*’s editors applied this same logic of exceptionalism to the state’s residents, maintaining that real Californians formed their “ideas for life” only from some kind of unique Californian epistemology, and, in fact, had “to be born on the soil of California” in order to be authentic.¹⁵ In this construct, they imagined that immigrants who “brought with them inbred ideas of government as a power above themselves” could not really be Californians, and they were nothing more to the state than “a lumpish cargo.”¹⁶ These

¹³See literary theorist Geoff Ward’s contention that all of America has been invented rather than discovered. He insists that culture here is notable “not only for the inseparability of writing from place, but by the inseparability of place from imagination, personal or collective.” Geoff Ward, *The Writing of America: Literature and Cultural Identity from the Puritans to the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 188.

¹⁴ “Americanization,” *California Southland*, Vol. IX, No. 91 (July, 1927): 16.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

home designers from Pasadena insisted that Angelenos did not fit the California imaginary at all, which was best exemplified by the residents of San Francisco.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, another of Pasadena's prominent and outspoken residents, had similar views about these outsiders who built their homes in the southern part of the state. But unlike *California Southland's* editors, Gilman promoted a view that was less deterministic about human nature, for she did believe that the development of the home in a context where domestic relations had been overturned would create people with better character.¹⁷ That the people Gilman was talking about needed to be white and Christian was clear in many of her writings; race was an insurmountable obstacle that drew out fundamental inconsistencies in her theory about environment, human traits, and heritability. Still, for Gilman, "home" was as much an intellectual framework for social relations as it was a place. "Better housing for the poor," according to Gilman, "is necessary, but so it is for the rich, for all of us. Truer housing; housing suitable to the age we live in; housing proper to the human soul." The "rearrangement of ideas and their consequent feelings" was the prerequisite to building a better home: "You cannot build right houses for modern humanity on the basis of a kitchen," Gilman insisted.¹⁸ She imagined a change in gender roles that would be facilitated by a different (kitchenless) type of home – another example of an imagined but never built social structure that often resurfaced in early twentieth-century Los Angeles.¹⁹

While it is true that many social ideas remained imaginary in the late nineteenth century, some actually were constructed. In 1893, the same year that Chicago's White City illuminated the Midwest, Southland architect George Wyman, inspired by Edward Bellamy's utopian fiction,

¹⁷Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Human Work*, 1904 (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2005), 384.

¹⁸*ibid.*, 387.

¹⁹Kitchenless homes were important in the utopian colony of Llano del Rio and in social and architectural movements in Southern California during the early decades of the twentieth century. See chapter 5 in this study.

made a significant change to Los Angeles's built-environment, perhaps intended to model good behavior in the competitive arena of commercial business. It was not as expansive as a City Beautiful would have been, but it was a new development that was destined to create an emblem of the era that still stands today. This was the year that Wyman completed the construction of downtown Los Angeles's Bradbury building. Commissioned by one of the city's leading real estate developers, Louis Bradbury,²⁰ who did not live to see the building's opening day, the Bradbury was a very early mixed-use structure, complete with elevators, electricity and telephones in every office, grand staircases extending from a ground-level arcade, and an atrium that ushered in all the natural light the Land of Sunshine had to offer.

That the enormous construction effort required to complete the Bradbury Block proceeded in spite of the Depression of 1893 was not lost on Los Angeles observers, who noted that "the feeling of apprehension and distrust which rests like a pall upon nearly every section of our land has neither shaken the confidence of the eastern investor in Los Angeles or subdued the enterprise and progress of its people."²¹ Indeed, reporters claimed that "the buildings under way are, moreover, of the most substantial and modern character," and the Bradbury, with its fifty-thousand terra cotta exterior bricks, three-hundred fifty tons of steel, four-hundred tons of iron, mantles of quarter-sawed oak, seventeen-thousand seven-hundred feet of tin ceiling, and imitation onyx elevators was a prime example of the city's hopeful modern growth. From the pages of *Looking Backward*, George Wyman and the late Louis Bradbury were building L.A.'s future.²²

²⁰Bradbury had made his fortune in another typical Southern California industry – gold and silver mining, though most of his fortune was earned from mines in Mexico.

²¹ "The Handsome Bradbury Block," *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 40, Number 124 (August 13, 1893).

²²ibid.

In *Looking Backward*, Bellamy had predicted that commercial buildings in the future – during the era of the cooperative commonwealth – would all be illuminated magnificently by natural light. “It was the first interior of a twentieth century public building that I had ever beheld,” Bellamy’s time traveler Julian West remarked, “and the spectacle naturally impressed me deeply. I was in a vast hall full of light, received not alone from the windows on all sides, but from the dome, the point of which was a hundred feet above.”²³ What better place to build this future than in Los Angeles, where light was unlimited, land was inexpensive, and the commercial center had never been built in antiquated styles that would need to be demolished before a new vision could be realized.

Literature and landscape seemed to have much in common in the Southland; both started out as blank slates (or at least were thought to be blanks) and became what they were intended to be only as a result of intense intellectual investment. In Southern California, Edward Bellamy’s utopian fiction, *Looking Backward* and Helen Hunt Jackson’s romantic recollection of early California, *Ramona*, stand out from a range of utopian, social, and economic literature that was widely read during the period. *Looking Backward* had a profound effect on social movements and politics, and was the second or third highest selling novel of the entire nineteenth century, ranking behind Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and, possibly (though records are not entirely reliable) Lew Wallace’s *Ben Hur*.²⁴

²³ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000 – 1887* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1888), 69.

²⁴ The notion that *Looking Backward* was the second or third highest selling book of the century is often cited, and is repeated in Eric Fromm’s introduction to the Signet paperback edition of *Looking Backward* published in 1960. The more authoritative compendium of best sellers, however, is Frank Luther Mott’s *Golden Multitudes*, published in 1947. Mott identifies *Looking Backward* as the best seller of 1888 and one of the top sellers in the era, but never attempts to rank books by century. See Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 172.

In the twenty-first century it would be difficult to argue that a single work of fiction could be taken seriously enough by the general public to persist as an important social influence, but literature and life interacted more dynamically in the nineteenth century. California novelist Frank Norris saw this at the time, and tried to look at the population arithmetic that might make the potential impact of social novels so meaningful in 1903. Imagining a book that could sell one hundred thousand copies, Norris commented that “it is a large audience, one hundred thousand, larger than any roofed building now standing could contain. Less than one one-hundredth part of that number nominated Lincoln. Less than half of it won Waterloo.”²⁵

Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* sold more than one million copies in the United States within a few years (five hundred thousand in its first year alone); considering the way circulation was estimated for this period, it is not unreasonable to assert that more than five million Americans read *Looking Backward* shortly after its first publication. This is roughly one out of every fourteen Americans,²⁶ hence it is little wonder that images and ideas from *Looking Backward* entered American culture and influenced popular politics.²⁷ While there are no book sales statistics specifically for California during the period, based on the over-penetration of Bellamy clubs in Southern California, it is likely that *Looking Backward* was at least this well known in the state, and probably even more popular.²⁸

Promoting a response to what he saw as a widening gap in inequality resulting from urbanization and industrialization, Bellamy advocated a future in which goods, services, and culture would be equally distributed to all Americans, regardless of where they lived, along with

²⁵ Frank Norris, *The Responsibilities of the Novelist and Other Literary Essays* (London: Grant Richards, 1903), 50.

²⁶ *ibid.* Norris calculates circulation from purchases, and assumes a population of about 70,000,000 in 1903.

²⁷ Norris himself was an important contributor to literary radicalism, addressing social issues like the theft of California land by the railroads, exploitation of wheat farmers, and the infamous railroad-initiated massacre at Mussel Slough in northern California.

²⁸ There were thirty-three Bellamy clubs in what we would now call the greater Los Angeles area – out of a national estimate of approximately one-hundred sixty five clubs. The Southland, then, produced twenty percent of all clubs in America.

the opportunity to pursue a career of their choosing, without worry about compensation or stability. Everyone would be drafted into what Bellamy called America's industrial army, where each served according to his abilities and highest interests, and each received the same remuneration, regardless of job or profession.

Though there was the specter of radical socialism in Bellamy's ideal political system (he called it Nationalism to denote the nationalization of all industry), he never lost track of "consumption as a means to happiness," as William Leach has so aptly described "the democratization of desire" that he contends began to occur in the 1880s.²⁹ Bellamy's vision, in fact, extended the shift from producer to consumer that had started to predominate in American capitalism. Under Bellamyism, American cities, towns, and villages were to become department stores – the government as a mass merchandiser would distribute all fashion of technological advances, appliances, and goods through catalogue showrooms that everyone could access.

This discourse in *Looking Backward* may be read as a critique of America's nineteenth-century culture of consumption for being unfair and inefficient, rather than as an indictment of consumer society. Bellamy, in this case, does not leave much to conjecture, for he has provided an explicit dialogue about "shopping." A close reading of these passages is crucial to understanding the bridge between Bellamy's social theories and the mainstream capitalist consumerism that would take hold in Southland communities.

Bellamy tells his readers that the twentieth-century woman Edith Leete (Julian West's love interest) was "an indefatigable shopper" neither to trivialize her social role nor to critique it, but actually to valorize it; to demonstrate that consumption was a requisite skill under

²⁹ William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 8.

Nationalism (Bellamy's social theory).³⁰ There was to be wide product choice, along with a system of shopping that was free from persuasive advertising, misleading promotion, and commissioned sales people. Being a good shopper is an important personal attribute in Bellamy's utopia because it is the informed acquisition of modernity that ensures a healthy society and a happy life.

America portends a future where all local stores will be showrooms carrying every consumer product that exists; they function as "sample stores" for the nation's central distribution centers.³¹ Sales clerks, in Bellamy's ideal society, will record orders, but they play no part in persuading consumers to purchase anything. Such a dialogue was thought by Edith Leete to be impertinent, and she asked Julian West (the time traveler from 1887), "What concern could it possibly be to the clerks whether people bought or not?"³² Bellamy does not contest the culture of consumption he saw emerging in the late nineteenth century. In fact, he embraces it.

In 1888, the same year that *Looking Backward* was published, *Los Angeles Times* reporters characterized their city's downtown shopping very much in line with Bellamy's ideas, claiming that Spring Street's new People's Store location "is the largest store of its character west of the Rocky Mountains." It surpasses San Francisco's consumer emporiums, the *Times* maintains, for that city's largest store sells only dry goods. The People's Store, on the other hand, is a "department store, having many classes of goods under one management."³³ Moreover, it is truly the People's Store, according to its promoters, for "all the needs and luxuries of shopping

³⁰ This theme was carried into the co-operative movement that lasted through the 1920s. See James Peter Warbasse, "Life Not Labor," *Co-operation*, Vol. VII, No 4 (April 1921), 1. In fact, proper consumption was as much a part of the co-operative movement as common ownership of production. Authors who wrote in the magazine of the movement, *Co-operation*, often pointed out that co-operation was about being both an owner and a consumer.

³¹ Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, 82.

³² *ibid.*, 81.

³³ "The People's Store, a Glance through this Large Establishment," *Los Angeles Times*, (August 22, 1888), 5.

have been brought together and placed at prices which the people can afford to pay.”³⁴ Just as Bellamy insisted, proper (people’s) capitalism would work, or so the *Los Angeles Times* believed, for the good of the consumer.

Most importantly, while this modern image of a department store is central to Bellamy’s ideal society, some of the department store characteristics he valorized were difficult to find in nineteenth-century America. Bellamy dreamt that rural stores would be just as good as urban ones, with all the availability of goods, conveniences, and the same fair prices. He wanted to bring the benefits of urban material culture to rural America without the problems of the city. Utopia had to eliminate the unfair advantages of cosmopolitan consumerism, equalizing the benefits of small town living. This, in effect, is the position of Los Angeles boosters, and is a theme that runs throughout the city’s real estate, commercial, and retail developments. Bellamy was certainly not the originator of the concept of a rural-city, which emerged in one form or another as a global response to rapid industrialization, but he presented its ideals in practical terms that seemed achievable in everyday life; the rural-city image that people read about in *Looking Backward* was the same community description that dominated Southland discourse.³⁵

Defending the platform of Nationalism against critics, in 1892 Bellamy explicitly promoted the ideal of country life, insisting “that a direct tendency of Nationalism will be to check the excessive growth of the cities at the expense of the country.”³⁶ In fact, one of the core

³⁴ “The People’s Store,” 5.

³⁵ The idea that urbanization had to be mitigated in some way by retaining the positive “natural” elements of rural life was part of a global effort to manage the rapid transformations modernity had brought about in the late nineteenth century (See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). Los Angeles, however, was unique in that community builders believed they were creating combined rural/urban zones rather than “garden cities” that retained vestiges of the country in the city. In Los Angeles, commercial agriculture could be promoted only twenty minutes away from the urban center and the city could support backyard farmers who produced food for distribution, not just subsistence. At least this was the myth, if not the typical reality.

³⁶ Edward Bellamy, “Looking Backward Again,” *The North American Review*, Vol. 150, No. 400 (Mar., 1890): 359.

principles of what Bellamy called both a “definite philosophy and a positive program,”³⁷ was that “central control of production and distribution will, to a great degree, destroy the advantages which, under the competitive system, great cities have over villages as localities for manufacturing.”³⁸ The result, he concluded, would be both industrial and population decentralization. This was the quality of life Bellamy sought, and it also was the idea of a cultured, sophisticated, and opportunity-filled rural lifestyle that Los Angeles boosters and developers attempted to describe and occasionally even build as they developed land that was accessible to the city’s urban centers.

As many people came to understand Bellamy’s vision, society could move toward a socialism that would not exactly replace Americans’ individualistic conception of democracy, but would merge it with a sense of community well-being in such a way that both impulses could survive. Bellamy promoted this popular conception, and located Nationalism within what he termed a social evolution connected to Robert Owen’s communitarian projects, Henry George’s social movement to “nationalize land,”³⁹ worker organization under the Knights of Labor, and popular political reform as expressed in the platform of the People’s Party.⁴⁰ Still, Bellamy never separated the idea of consumption as a requisite to a good life from the idea that the social order had to change for quality of life to really improve in a meaningful way.

³⁷ Edward Bellamy, “Progress of Nationalism in the United States,” *The North American Review*, Vol. 154, No. 427 (Jun., 1892): 742.

³⁸ Bellamy, “Looking Backward Again,” 359.

³⁹ This was Bellamy’s description of George’s Single-Tax platform, not necessarily the most common interpretation of the movement that emerged from George’s *Progress and Poverty*, but one that accurately emphasized George’s contention that private ownership of land (as distinct from property built on the land) was an unjust alienation of nature. See Henry George, “Book VII, Justice of the Remedy,” *Progress and Poverty* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1879), 331.

⁴⁰ Bellamy, “Progress of Nationalism in the United States,” 743.

Los Angeles real estate magnate Gaylord Wilshire, whose socialism had been contoured by Bellamy's Nationalism, positioned ideas about mass access to consumer goods as a practical solution to economic problems when he published a book of his editorials in 1906, explaining that "if we could properly distribute what is produced without at the same time checking production, there is no economist but would admit that the problem of poverty could be solved."⁴¹ Wilshire, like Bellamy, believed that productivity gains from what he called industrial "evolution" could be distributed to society's workers if they owned the means of production. This, in essence, is the principle behind Bellamy's vision of enhanced consumer-product distribution.

Looking back on Bellamyism from the vantage point of New Deal cooperation in 1934, the California Utopian Society's Wayland Ramsey asserted that Bellamy "seems to have been the first to recognize man's value as a human and a consumer rather than a worker."⁴² Bellamy's ideas about consumer equality are fundamental to happiness in his future society, and the ability to consume is essential for social equality to emerge. Moreover, Bellamy's emphasis on material comfort, especially in the midst of the economic turmoil that began when Jay Cook's bank failed in 1873, is one explanation for what caused his novel to resonate with the American public.

When George Wyman designed and constructed the Bradbury Building in 1893, he believed Bellamy's ideas were the blueprint for the American future he would construct in Southern California. He believed, as did Charlotte Perkins Gilman, that the outward forms of living and working environments could act on the evolution of human character. As if by grand design, the same year the Bradbury building arose another of the Los Angeles real estate royalty, George Shatto, who had built the city's largest and grandest high Victorian residence and at one

⁴¹ H. Gaylord Wilshire, *Wilshire Editorials* (New York: Wilshire Book Company, 1906), 11.

⁴² Wayland Ramsey, "Ideal of Utopia Deeply Rooted," *Utopian News* (Los Angeles, July 23, 1934), 4.

time had planned to reinvent Santa Catalina Island as a Victorian paradise, was hit and killed by a train.⁴³ Wyman's upward arc and Shatto's demise marked a turning point in the way Los Angeles buildings would be envisioned. In fact, while many new Angelenos reproduced the moral values they brought with them from other areas, aesthetic and functional features of the structures they built in Los Angeles did begin to break the Victorian conventions that symbolized nineteenth-century social order. Catalina never did become paradise (though it did eventually sprout a Casino and a "pleasure pier"), and modernity, in the form of a train, came thundering through the Southland to eviscerate anyone who would stand in its way by building something that looked old or out of style.

Still, commercial buildings like the Bradbury were only a small part of the Los Angeles environment in 1893. Most of the terrain was underdeveloped land. Not empty; not without a past, as it might seem from booster literature and travel memoirs, but without many commercial structures, residential concentrations, or development plans. California land seemed ideal, not for population clusters, but for producing many varieties of citrus, including oranges, lemons, citrons, and grapefruit.⁴⁴ As Albert Shaw, a historian of the Icarian movement, put it in 1884, "If the writer were seeking the realization of a Utopia, his ideal would not be met in a community of factory operatives, nor of toiling agriculturists engaged in the rough labor of general farming in a Northern State; but of all places and all occupations on earth he would choose as most consonant with the theories and purposes of communism— California and horticulture."⁴⁵ Both the Icarians

⁴³ "Mr. George R. Shatto's Death," *Los Angeles Herald*, Vol. 40, Number 52 (June 2, 1893), 5.

⁴⁴ Ironically, the fruit which would be most associated with California, the navel orange, was only imported to the state from Brazil in the early 1870s. The first California navel oranges were not picked until 1875. See Sunkist Growers, Inc. history booklet, *Heritage of Gold: The First 100 Years of Sunkist Growers, Inc., 1893 – 1993*, Sunkist Growers', Inc. Headquarters Archives, Santa Clarita, CA., 4.

⁴⁵ Albert Shaw, *Icaria: A Chapter in the History of Communism* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), 142, paraphrased by Spenser Olin, "Speech at Orange County's 85th Birthday," March 11, 1974, celebration under joint auspices of Board of Supervisors and LISA (Let's Improve Santa Ana), transcript of proceedings provided by Orange County Superior Court Reporters' Association; proceedings reported by Jane E. McCoy, official court

and an important Oneida splinter group did relocate to California and purchase “fruit-lands” in the 1880s – validating Shaw’s speculation that California and citriculture might be the right choices for an ideal society.

Fruit and health – indeed fruit and paradise – were twin ideas that came together as California boosters imagined the state to be a sub-tropical Garden of Eden. Southern California fruit, in fact, already appeared to be on the verge of being recognized as the health food of the future when Tustin fruit grower, M.M Gulick was awarded a medal for his winning entry of Lisbon Lemons in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition Citrus Fruit competition. According to the judges, the Orange County lemons were “superior in size, thinness of peel, absence of tissue, and general appearance” to any other lemon – even those from the more established citrus-producing regions of the Mediterranean.⁴⁶ But the economic depression of 1893 distressed Southern California’s citrus farmers – small producers in particular. The industry only had become viable in the 1880s when the invention of the refrigerated railway car made it feasible to ship nationally, but now the growers were struggling to profit by supplying the nation with California’s latest health fad – oranges – not because of production issues (in fact they were over-producing), but because packaging, marketing, and shipping were too expensive for even medium sized growers.⁴⁷ In response to the Depression of 1893, California growers organized what became the model of producer-distributor cooperation and the shining example of successful populist restructuring of agriculture – the Southern California Fruit Growers Exchange.

reporter, Spenser Olin Research Papers, MS-F024, Box 2, Folder 29, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁴⁶ Certificate, World’s Columbian Exposition Award of Merit, 1893, Edna Phelps Collection, MS-R43, Box 5, Folder 11, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁴⁷ Charles Postal, *The Populist Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 112.

The Exchange, which would soon market its members' products under the brand "Sunkist," was not the first American or even Californian attempt at cooperative marketing, but it was the most ambitious.⁴⁸ It had to be, for even though the Grange had been experimenting with cooperative marketing since the 1870s, California's citrus industry was growing so quickly that it needed a solution for what historians have often characterized as the byproduct of such rapid growth; a marketing crisis.⁴⁹ California's citrus producers wanted cost efficiency, to be sure, but they also wanted a sustainable competitive advantage. They wanted to build the California economy by controlling the national citrus market.⁵⁰ This is precisely the problem that the California Fruit Growers' Exchange solved in 1893, when it was created as an entirely new kind of organization; inclusive, nominally democratic, technologically modern, and large scale.⁵¹ While organizations like the Grange and Farmers' Alliance were instrumental in forming and participating in cooperatives all over the nation, the California Fruit Growers' Exchange and the Fruit-Driers' Association that preceded it by two years, were examples of a new type of organization that successfully was able to intermingle corporate (large growers) and other cooperative interests; California was the only place in the nation where these combinations flourished in a significant way.

The Exchange banded together small, medium, and large producers and sellers of oranges to develop common picking and packaging standards, engage in cooperative marketing campaigns, reduce packing and shipping costs and, most importantly, control the supply of oranges that would reach the market. In this way, production costs and price could be stabilized by those who actually produced the oranges. The Exchange was democratic: each member,

⁴⁸ For a discussion of cooperative marketing in California's citrus industry, see Douglas Sackman, *Orange Empire*.

⁴⁹ Postal, 112.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 113.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 114.

regardless of size, had one vote (except for the executive board, where votes were based on carloads shipped); each member had the same unit cost for the business conducted by the Exchange; and each member had the same rights to marketing materials and advertising resources. California's fruit growers were certainly not proposing an alternative to capitalism, but they were transforming the way that capitalism operated for producers in what was rapidly becoming a consumer economy.

The rapid growth of the citrus industry, and the creative innovation it mustered to survive the Depression of 1893, was evidence to the area's Anglo settlers that seventy years' of Mexican custodianship had left the fertile land of Southern California underutilized, under-producing, and under-valued. *Hacendados* had never commercialized citrus; growing it only for personal consumption. They required large tracts of grazing land for cattle, most of which were wiped out in the drought and blights of 1863-64. The way Anglo settlers looked at it, even wheat, alfalfa, or cotton production would have been a more responsible use of Southern California land than cattle. Under Anglo direction, according to the new American narrative, citrus and population would transform the Southland from fallow fields to America's fruit basket by the 1880s.⁵²

As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the Anglo-Saxon trope of Mexican land underutilization had achieved the status of an origin myth for American California; historian Lisa Garcia Bedolla points out, in fact, that Americans had even used it as justification for the war against Mexico in 1848.⁵³ This type of myth, manifested in the popular conception that Mexican culture, *hacienda* culture, which Anglo-American colonists came to overthrow, had resulted in

⁵²Until the 1880s, California's major crop production was wheat, and most of the large scale wheat farms were in California's Central Valley. Between 1870 and 1930 California's acreage in tree and vine crops increased from about 100,000 to 2,000,000 – much of which was in the Southland. See Alan Olmstead and Paul Rhode, "An Overview of California Agricultural Mechanization, 1870 – 1930," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 62, No. 3, Quantitative Studies in Agrarian History (Summer 1988), 86-112.

⁵³Lisa Garcia Bedollo, *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 35.

poor stewardship of the land, had a long precedent in settler ideology. It had first manifested in the Anglo attitude toward Indians, but the Anglo conception of a poor Indian work ethic was not very relevant in Los Angeles, since Indians were marginalized and inconsequential landowners in Southern California by this time. Instead, the formulations that Anglos had used to delegitimize Indian land-stewardship could be reused and directed at Mexican culture. Indian inadequacies were replaced with *Californio* shortcomings, and Anglos contended that “hardworking whites” were better stewards of the land than the underproducing *Californios*. Southland utopia would be built up by imagining progress toward a better and whiter future, but it also relied on a look backward. An imaginary past was required to set the foundation for a new Los Angeles.⁵⁴

Many historians have made the case that ever since the Spanish first named California, the territory has been the recipient of a profound place-making imaginary that used literary characters and mythological figures to redefine the identities and races of the people they found on the land, and to configure the social order they hoped to establish.⁵⁵ Ethnic mythmaking was still active two-hundred and fifty years later when former Mexican citizens were attempting to integrate into a contentious United States that did not welcome them on equal terms. *Sangre azul* (blue blood), the invented lineage of California’s Mexican residents, meant that the past was a Spanish past – white, noble, and European, just like the past and present of the new conquerors.

⁵⁴ See Roberto Ramón Lint Sagarena, *Aztlán and Arcadia: Religion, Ethnicity, and the Creation of Place* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 22-50; 87-128 for a thorough and insightful discussion of the role of religion in the creation of Spanish versus Mexican imaginaries in Southern California.

⁵⁵ In fact, the whole idea of California was born from a sixteenth-century Spanish literary romance (based on an older Portuguese novel) that gave the land its name. See Garcíordonez de Montalvo, *Amadis of Gaul*, Robert Southey trans., (London: T.N. Longman and O. Bees Paternoster Row, 1803). Race and gender were implicated even in this inspiration for the territorial name: The name of California appears three times to describe an island “to the right hand of the Indies.” The island’s queen, Calafia, was supposed to be the ruler of a kingdom of black Amazon-like warriors. According to literary scholar Dora Beale Polk, Montalvo added a fourth book to an older Portuguese romance, and it is this book, published a decade or so before the discovery of Baja California, from which the place name is derived. See Dora Beale Polk, *The Island of California: A History of the Myth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 124.

Californio activist and writer Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, in her 1885 novel, *The Squatter and the Don*, contributed to this mythologizing of the Mexican past by erasing the Indian and mixed-race (*mestizo*) populations of California (which were certainly the majority), while romanticizing the aesthetic grace of the *hacienda* and economic productivity of the *rancho*.⁵⁶ Her literary efforts constructed a sophisticated racial stratification that in the era of the *Codigo Negro* might have aligned with the complex Spanish *sistema de castas*, but by the late-nineteenth century was transformed by popular interpretations of evolutionary theory into an imaginary world where racial “losers” simply no longer existed.⁵⁷

Lamenting a native Californian’s fall from the lofty social status he had achieved before the period of Anglo domination, Ruiz de Burton maintained that, “In that hod full of bricks not only his own sad experience was represented, but the entire history of the native Californians of Spanish descent was epitomized. Yes, Gabriel carrying his hod full of bricks up a steep ladder was a symbolic representation of his race. The natives of Spanish origin, having lost all their property, must henceforth be hod carriers.”⁵⁸ The symbolism of hod carriers places Ruiz de Burton’s “Spano-Americans” directly in a discursive lineage of African Americans, but she was not actually protesting the discriminatory treatment of non-Caucasians.

Instead, her allegory was meant to chastise Anglos for having missed the mark, not because they oppressed African Americans, but because they were blind to the fact that Spanish Californians shared a white heritage with Americans. If Americans recognized the true *casta* of the *Californios*, according to Ruiz de Burton’s argument, “Spano-Americans” (as she labeled

⁵⁶ William Deverell calls this process “whitewashing.” See Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: the Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Another interesting dimension to “whitewashing” is the *Californio* participation in it, which is reflected in Ruiz de Burton’s work, but was much more complex. See Sagarena, *Aztlán and Arcadia*, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, 1885 (Houston: Arte Public Press of the University of Houston, 1992), 116.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 325.

them) could be instrumental in reconstructing new California places – not as laborers, but as property owners and promoters of high culture. Ruiz de Burton’s utopian dream of Anglo- and Spanish-American brotherhood expressed what might have been an inherent limitation in the process of imagining a utopia in the late nineteenth century; ideal places tended to replicate the class divisions that existed in the real world by imagining that everyone in a future “better place” had assimilated the characteristics of the people at the top of the current social hierarchy.⁵⁹

Ironically, Anglo Los Angeles place-makers did appropriate Ruiz de Burton’s idea of Spanish whiteness when it was necessary to trace a spatial lineage back to Anglo ancestry. Such mythological ethnography is deeply entwined in California’s narrative of mission heritage, where the Christianizing activities of Spanish missionaries are directly linked to the Anglicizing project carried out by Los Angeles builders throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. But this never translated to upgrading the social status of real people of Hispanic heritage. It was nothing more than the self-serving evidence of pure lineage (like the Spanish *limpieza de sangre* or cleaning of blood); no different than other nation-building efforts to redeem a racial genealogy by rewriting it to conform to contemporary discursive categories of race.

There is far more than an arbitrary picking and choosing of selected ethnographic myths at work in Los Angeles place-making, however. In fact, the creation of a distinct Southland ancestry is an important and intimate part of community planning. It is, moreover, a type of space appropriation,⁶⁰ and Los Angeles boosters, by drawing from the seemingly contradictory myths of poor land stewardship and Spanish whiteness, were able to replace the vision of relocating an Eastern city to the frontier. Neither did they need to transplant Midwestern farming

⁵⁹This is what Zygmunt Bauman calls “the class-committed nature” of all imagined futures. Bauman contends that it is the nature of utopia to reveal the “divisions of interest” that exist within present day society. Bauman, *Socialism: the Active Utopia*, 15.

⁶⁰ See Perla Korosec-Serfaty, ed., *Appropriation of Space: Proceedings of the Third International Architectural Psychology Conference* (Strasbourg, France: IAPS, 1976).

to the West Coast, since the Anglo promotion of a successful citrus economy demonstrated. Los Angeles, in this booster paradigm, could be built on the foundations of a culturally exceptional past with unrealized economic potential; it was destined to become a different type of American place. It would be an urban center to rival San Francisco and Portland, at least, but it would also be a productive, diversified, economic center. In 1893 this meant agriculture and, increasingly, oil extraction, and both industries, not coincidentally, exemplified the value of Southern California's real estate; the productivity of its land under Anglo stewardship.

Beginning in the 1890s, and reaching its literary peak in the early 1920s, in fact, promoters had connected California's land myth and oil, noting that "the right way to independence" was to "own the land, and collect your royalties." "This is the best way," they insisted, "to make money in the oil business."⁶¹ The developers of this land were selling up to five acre lots in a twenty-acre tract they named "Opportunity." While few people would claim that this investment scheme was in any real sense a cooperative venture, one of the economic enticements was that in addition to revenue from production on his/her own lot early investors "also receive a certain portion of the royalty received from the entire 20 acres."⁶² The ten wells within a few hundred feet of "Opportunity," which were producing more than twenty-eight thousand barrels of oil a day, had, in fact, become the platform for a community of oil that disrupted the concept of extreme individualism by enabling founders to achieve an economic override based on community production. While this seemed to be an innovative way to re-establish feudal tithing, the community of oil it depended on was not destined to flourish for much longer than the area's utopian communities.⁶³ Oil extraction would continue to fuel

⁶¹ Brochure, "J. F. Lasley Interests, Los Angeles," a promotional mailing dated June 23, 1922, Don Meadows Papers MS-R01, Box 84, Folder 5, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ibid.*

economic growth in Southern California for several decades, but the main benefit of these early strikes went well beyond economic growth. Such ventures, promoted by the impressive literary skills of boosters and marketers, attracted immigrant (largely white) laborers, and this in the final analysis was to be the lasting legacy of the creative myths that declared a nearly magical quality to Southern California's geological and agricultural characteristics.⁶⁴

Population growth, the natural byproduct of economic development, was essential if California was going to realize its ambitious urbanization goals. Its new industries and services needed more laborers; the indigenous Indians and *mestizos* had been decimated; racial discrimination inhibited growth of the Chinese and Mexican labor pools, which consequently could not provide sufficient numbers to build a city, a farming industry, or a merchant and professional class. Not that they would have been eagerly integrated into the envisioned Anglo culture (in spite of Ruiz de Burton's contention that the Spanish and Anglos shared a common heritage). When the Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed in 1892, it became unlikely that substantial numbers of Chinese laborers could immigrate to the U.S. The outcome of this racial planning, and I would characterize it as no less conscious or intentional than any other form of community planning, was that the new city of Los Angeles was going to be a white city. Consequently, promoters needed to invent a Los Angeles that would attract the people they classified as white laborers.

⁶⁴ In 1929 the Shell Oil Company broadcast a radio show called "Shell Happytime Radio" to markets in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, and Spokane. The Company subsequently published a monthly pamphlet based on its radio programs, called *Shell Echoes from the Shell Ship of Joy*. In addition to its upbeat moral messages, Shell included poems about oil-related commerce such as Gasoline Service Stations, which were written by contributors, noting that the people who worked in these "oases" were "a cheerful and obliging class" who "give us water, shine our glass, When we drive in to buy our gas." Oil would continue to boost Southern California lifestyle and culture. Interestingly, Shell's publication is among the very few Southern California promotions that feature any African Americans. The May 1929 edition of *Shell Echoes from the Shell Ship of Joy* promotes a concert by tenor William Powers and includes a sophisticated photograph of Powers dressed in black tie. *Shell Echoes from the Shell Ship of Joy*, Vol. II, No. 1 (May 1929), California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860-1990, CTP Box 3, Folder 4, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

This they did by inventing three promotional narratives that were compelling, not primarily to elite Easterners or Midwesterners looking for health and leisure (who had been the stalwarts of earlier immigrations), but to the masses who were searching for work, wealth, and stability. The first of these narratives claimed the ubiquity of land – there was government land to homestead; there was desert land to claim under the Desert Land Act of 1877 – along with instructions for making the desert bloom; and there could be single family homes for every family.⁶⁵ Land could be free, or nearly so, and homes could be purchased for \$10 down and \$10 a month, until \$500 had been paid. Zero interest loans were even offered by developers and banks. In 1893 Los Angeles, it was more likely you would become a homeowner than anywhere else in the nation.⁶⁶

Home ownership extended throughout a vast Southern California geography: In 1889, Los Angeles County extended all the way south to San Diego – it was only in that year that Orange seceded from L.A. to form a separate county. The case for secession (which the future Orange County town of Anaheim resisted) rested on the great distance people from the south had to travel to pay taxes and conduct administrative business in Los Angeles (or so the advocates said). But it is also clear that the area of Orange County had been developing a separate idea about its noteworthiness since the 1870s, when, at least according to some reports, economic growth outpaced the northern part of Los Angeles, which did not yet have a convenient railway terminus. A. T. Hawley, reporting on the Southern territories for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in 1876, noted that “unimproved lands [cost] sixty dollars per acre; improved eighty

⁶⁵ More than fifty years after passage of the Homestead Act, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce was still publishing pamphlets like *Uncle Sam's Lands in Southern California and How to Acquire Them* (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1914). This booklet explains the advantages of claiming land under the Homestead Act or Desert Lands Act, and advises prospective claimants about the crops they might be able to grow.

⁶⁶ This was even true for African Americans. See Darnell Hunt and Ana-Christina Ramón, *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 63.

to one hundred per acre; a very clear case of more than doubling up,” since his previous report only one year before.⁶⁷ Even the small Orange County pier of Newport Landing believed it could become a center of shipping to rival the (then) underdeveloped ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.⁶⁸

The second promotional narrative promised work to any able bodied man, and claimed to offer a broader range of opportunities for women than was available in other places. In 1889 the end of the Los Angeles real estate boom, though economically negative overall, may even have created opportunities for wage work. “Try our new employment agency,” Gitoe-Guthrie prominently advertised in the *Los Angeles Herald*, “collecting and renting a specialty.”⁶⁹ But less than ten years later, advertising to fill open wage-earning positions was more sophisticated and, perhaps, also a distortion of the booster myth that any able bodied man could find work. It may have been more likely that any able bodied man (and woman) could be exploited by those who had figured out that the booster myth of jobs-for-all created an opportunity to take advantage of all who were seeking jobs.

⁶⁷ A. T. Hawley, *The Present Condition, Growth, Progress and Advantages of Los Angeles City and County, Southern California* (Los Angeles: Mirror Printing, Ruling and Binding House, 1876), 1, Don Meadows Papers, MS-RO1, Box 36, Folder 7, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁶⁸ Lucile Meyer, “John McMillan Tells Half Century of Beach Life,” *Newport News Supplement*, July 30, 1931, MS-RO1, Box 49, Folder 17, Don Meadows Papers, University Libraries Special Collections, University of California, Irvine. In 1881 there were 2 families (one Portuguese and one Italian) living in Newport Landing, but still it served as the port for Santa Ana, Anaheim, Orange, Corona, Colton, and San Bernardino. Large sea-going vessels anchored and unloaded cargoes there. By 1902, however, the city had landed on a different mission. In an article from the *Anaheim Gazette* dated May 29, 1902 it is noted that “C.L. Hanson, a Los Angeles capitalist, and W.S. Collins of Riverside, are associated in an enterprise that has absorbed Newport Beach.” The purchase price was estimated to be above \$60,000, and the reporter concluded that “Newport Beach is already a resort of considerable prominence. . . . Under the impetus of the new company, the place will certainly occupy a place among the foremost resorts of Southern California.” “Newport Beach Sold to Syndicate,” *Anaheim Gazette*, May 29, 1902 (typewritten copy), MS-RO1 Box 49, folder 17, Don Meadows Papers, University Libraries Special Collections, University of California, Irvine.

⁶⁹ “Want Ads,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Vol. 33, No. 6, 17 October 1889, accessed online at <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc> on July 26, 2014.

“WANTED MEN AND BOYS,” declared an ad in the June 18, 1908 edition of the *Los Angeles Herald*. The ad was placed by the Union School of Trades and Eastern Contracting Company, and promised “thoroughly competent fair wages while learning plumbing, electricity, bricklaying, etc. in a few months.” This advertiser was both a trade school and employer (claiming to refund tuition after two months); if a man did not have a skill when arriving in Los Angeles, it seemed easy to acquire one quickly. While we do not know how likely it was that any of the Union School’s students actually were ever employed in construction, it is certain that if a builder could not make money building, it was also possible to earn it by charging others to learn the skill of building; teaching, in this isolated example, perhaps because of its unusual masculinity, proved to be more lucrative in the building trades than it would be elsewhere.

Generally, teaching was one of the professions where women were represented in substantial numbers in early Los Angeles, but this was an exception rather than a marker of unusual opportunity.⁷⁰ In 1917 the California Commission of Education and Housing classified teachers as social workers. “This is epochal,” the Commission insisted, “for it marks the passing of the Medieval Age idea of education.”⁷¹ But if this reclassification was supposed to acknowledge the important social role of teachers, there is little evidence that either their status or wages changed – only their responsibility. More than two-hundred teachers volunteered to work on the Commission’s survey, helping to classify and tabulate survey responses from thousands of Los Angeles “white Americans” and “foreign immigrants” (the category which included African Americans). One woman, Mrs. Frank A. Gibson, served as the Commissioner

⁷⁰ It also appears to be an unintended consequence of the teacher shortage caused by the requirement for teachers to sign oaths of loyalty to the Union during the Civil War. Apparently, Confederate sympathy was so high in the Los Angeles public school system that a substantial number of pedagogues refused to sign and were forced to resign. See James M Guinn, *Historical and Biographical Record of Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Chicago: Chapman Publishers, 1901), 119.

⁷¹ Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, “A Community Survey made in Los Angeles City” (San Francisco: Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1919), 7.

from Los Angeles, but the rest of the work on this far-reaching project that characterizes poverty, geographic ethnicity, health, education, and housing in the most urban areas of Los Angeles remained unattributed. We can posit that at least a part of the reason for such anonymity was the inherent femininity associated with teaching and social work.

Women specifically were in demand for certain jobs, and newspapers did carry an advertising column classification entitled “Men/Women” that would seem to signify there were employment opportunities available to either men or women. It turns out that this column did not usually advertise salaried jobs, however, but instead was heavily weighted toward solicitations to invest in starting your own business. The *Los Angeles Herald* did have a special column for “Help, Female,” and it is not surprising that the occupations advertised here were limited to areas generally perceived to be more feminine. Advertisers claimed that “Beauty Culture Pays Big,” and promoted positions for clothing buyers, hairdressing, and nanny work.⁷² Furthermore, both male and female job seekers could run their own ads asking for work – free of charge and for an indefinite amount of time, so long as the copy was personally delivered to the *Herald’s* advertising office every week.

While women may have been able to participate in Los Angeles’ commercial world, their opportunities were circumscribed by the same patriarchal boundaries that delineated nineteenth-century gender roles everywhere. Even utopia, in fact, did not do much to change this. Edward Bellamy’s popular writing, for example, while taken by feminists as a hopeful articulation of a better future that reduced women’s burden of domestic work, still mostly limited women’s roles to a domestic sphere. Following a formulation developed by Nancy Cott, perhaps it is better to characterize Bellamy’s perspective as “opposition to sex hierarchy” rather than an affirmation of

⁷² *Los Angeles Herald*, volume 35, no. 260 (18 June 1908), page 4 Advertisements, column 3, accessed online at <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc>, July 26, 2014.

sex equality.⁷³ The planning of Bellamy-influenced places, in any event, continued to be constrained by established ideas of masculinity and femininity, and while new social visions would begin to break down the boundaries that operated on gender roles in employment and suffrage, utopian social visions did not push these boundaries socially, sexually, or economically as much as might have been expected.⁷⁴ In spite of its attractiveness to radical and progressive women, outside of a core belief in employment opportunity, it is difficult to agree that Bellamyism overcame the nineteenth century's highly circumscribed gender ideals.⁷⁵

That Bellamy's 1888 radical philosophy exposed an incomplete re-envisioning of gender with regard to the position of women does not seem as surprising when we consider that even decades into the twentieth century radicals still seemed unwilling or unable to rethink women's roles. In 1936, for example, Vera Jane Pease of Los Angeles sent a letter to the editors of *Upton Sinclair's EPIC News*, commenting that "I write 'gentlemen' because I see and hear of so few 'ladies' in the radical movements. They are still slaves to radicals. They peddle papers, cook dinners, sell tickets, keep house, etc. The Townsend movement is failing because of this same defect, selfish men getting the big salaries that poor gullible sacrificing women earned."⁷⁶ There is no doubt that utopian theories attempted to extend the role of women into the workforce and

⁷³ Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 4.

⁷⁴ Social geographer Liz Bondi asks if it is possible to "read" places for constructions of femininity and masculinity. Liz Bondi, "Gender Symbols and Urban Landscapes," *Designing Cities: Critical Readings in Urban Design*, Alexander R. Cuthbert, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 204.

⁷⁵ The focus on equal economic "opportunity" was certainly not an uncommon way for late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century progressives to think about feminism. For a thorough discussion of how economic roles dovetailed with conceptions of equality see: Nancy Cott, "Equal Rights and Economic Roles," *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 117-142. Still, given the implied feminist radicalism in the popular reception to Bellamy it is important to understand that the types of practical ideas articulated in radical revolutionary movements, like the 1926 Code of Marriage (family code) enacted in the Soviet Union, which included guarantees of alimony upon divorce, parental support for children whether born within or outside of marriage, and legalized abortion (this was passed earlier) were never addressed in either the platforms of Bellamyite reformists or even the ideological theories written by Bellamy. For a discussion of family transformation in the early Soviet Union see: Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites, eds., *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

⁷⁶ Vera Jane Pease, "Letter to the Editor," *Upton Sinclair's National Epic News* (Vol. 2, No. 52, May 25, 1936), 8, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

reduce their burden in the home, but there is little practical evidence that on the whole women's lives were any more visible in such movements. Gender boundaries, as many historians have noted, are notoriously difficult to dismantle.⁷⁷ As Vera Jane Pease's letter demonstrates, such boundaries held at least as firmly in all other areas of social existence as they did in the workplace.

Throughout the nation journalism was rapidly becoming a profession that, while it did not offer any real sense of equality, did provide Eastern women with an occupational venue that transcended the private sphere.⁷⁸ As Southland careers went, however, if journalism was becoming a job open to women, it was not apparent in Los Angeles' radical press. With the exception of a flurry of articles one year from the prominent Pasadena radical Kate Crane Gartz, few women writers appeared in the voluminous pages of Sinclair's EPIC News, and, reminiscent of the way the EPIC press also ignored the race issue, between 1934 and 1938 more than two-thousand pages of editorials, features, syndicated columns, and newswire articles were silent about women's rights. Only slightly better was the Utopian Society newspaper, where member Blossom Neilan contributed a regular feminist column beginning in 1934. Ironically, mainstream press like the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Herald* devoted much more space to the issues of gender and race, though most (but not all) of the articles they published were negative and both papers made a habit of picking up gendered stories about African-American crimes (especially murder) that occurred throughout the nation, whether or not such stories were at all relevant to Angelenos.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Jeremiah Axelrod, *Inventing Autopia*, 37.

⁷⁸ Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

⁷⁹The area's leading African-American newspaper, *The California Eagle*, made a point of critiquing what its editors called "the attitude of dailies towards Negro Americans" in the April 29, 1916 edition of the paper, where a front page, full column article entitled "Woman Accused Poisoning Child" noted that "in nearly every instance when and where Negroes come up for publicity, only the darkest side of his life is pictured in the white dailies."

But, as the leading newspapers' advertising columns illustrated, salaried jobs were not the only money-earning opportunities in Los Angeles. For those new male and female residents who expected more than wage work there was no paucity of compelling ideas (in addition to farming, of course), like the one placed in the want ads by The Mail Order World (of Lockport N.Y.), noting that "there are unusual opportunities for making money these days, and it is not difficult to begin."⁸⁰ Of course, as many new Angelenos may have discovered when they were unable to sell the inventory they purchased from The Mail Order World, it was not difficult to fail, either. Still, this column, along with similar ones in all of the Southland newspapers, less than a year after the economic downturn of 1907, provided black-and-white evidence that the booster myth of employment for all able-bodied people might be true – even for beleaguered Japanese workers, who could take advantage of the Pacific Japanese Employment Bureau, which apparently had so many positions to fill that it aggressively advertised to solicit new workers to be hired.⁸¹

The third promotional narrative, inexorably connected to the first two, was that Southern California was a place where wage slavery could be overcome. Ignoring Southern California's pre-Civil War ambivalence about African-American chattel slavery, boosters promoted the idea that the condition many believed had rehabilitated slavery during Reconstruction (wage slavery) had been overcome in Los Angeles.⁸² Even though it was a notorious open-shop town, the area magically had become a workers' paradise: A non-Asian immigrant could own a home, land, and even his own business. Residing in Southern California could balance work and leisure, which,

⁸⁰ *Los Angeles Herald*, vol 35, no. 260.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² For a visitor's impression of Southern California's support for slavery see Hinton Helper, *The Land of Gold: Reality versus Fiction* (Baltimore: Hinton Helper, 1855). For a discussion of Californian, and specifically Southern Californian, support for the Confederacy, see Glenna Matthews, "Coppery California," *The Golden State in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

in turn, was the key to a long, successful, and healthy life.⁸³ Since the 1850s, travelers had vacationed in Southern California for its medicinal springs and spas, but planning was necessary to transform it from a part-time health destination to a full-time healthy city.

In 1907 City Beautiful advocate Dana Bartlett combined the myth of magical weather with the myth that Los Angeles was a worker's windfall, claiming that "to none has the climate such a cash value as to the working man. No days lost because of the storm or cold; no using up in winter of that which has been saved in summer; no suffering from lack of coal or clothing." In fact, Bartlett wrapped all the L.A. advantages into a single statement, adding that the Southland worker "is able to possess a home of his own, and though its walls may be only the thickness of a single board, yet covered with flowers and vines, it equals in comfort of an Eastern palace."⁸⁴ To Bartlett, Los Angeles was an irresistible place for workers.

Bartlett's study exemplified the idea that history is a kind of discourse, and boosters made history in a double sense. They made the events and they controlled the language and destination of discourse; first health, then wealth, then independence.⁸⁵ But still, boosters and builders, in the words of Garden City urban planner Clarence Stein, engaged in "not the work of a creator, but of a surgeon called in too late to operate on a decaying carcass."⁸⁶ Boosters were patching together an everyday place by removing what they wanted to avoid and retaining only a habitat of imagination.⁸⁷ While they would later romanticize what cultural anthropologist Renato

⁸³In fact, Southern California promotions also attracted substantial numbers of non-Anglo immigration, which the city attempted to deal with by restricting land owning and residency rights.

⁸⁴Dana Bartlett, *The Better City: A Sociological Study of a Modern City* (Los Angeles: The Neuner Company Press, 1907), 19.

⁸⁵Michael Payne, introduction, in *The Greenblatt Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 6.

⁸⁶Clarence S. Stein, "New Towns for New Purposes," *Toward New Towns for America* (Chicago: Public Administration Clearing House, 1951), 198-207, in *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture: 37 Essays from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present*, ed. by Lewis Mumford (New York: Reinhold Publishing, 1952), 336.

⁸⁷The idea that boosters could recreate the everyday is based on Stanley Fish's assertion that the "categories of 'natural' and 'everyday' are not essential, but conventional. See Stanley Fish, "Normal Circumstances, Literal Language, Direct Speech Acts, the Ordinary, the Everyday, the Obvious, What Goes Without Saying, and Other

Rosaldo has characterized as “imperialist nostalgia,” before boosters could long for past culture that settlement had physically destroyed, they also had to erase it from consciousness; to remove it from discourse.⁸⁸ Reinvention included within it an intrinsic act of eradication.⁸⁹

But by 1893, even with such sophisticated surgery, the type of city that Los Angeles could become was already circumscribed by the historical symbolism that drew “readers of cities” to the Pacific Coast.⁹⁰ Of course, 1893 was also the year Frederick Jackson Turner warned that, based on the 1890 Census, America’s frontier was “closed.”⁹¹ So, if westward movement had both relieved social pressure and opened up an intrinsically superior place to form new societies, in the West there would be, as one urban planning scholar expressed it, “a tremendous stress [that] was placed on the physical aspects of the community.”⁹² Indeed, if during the nineteenth century progress could be defined merely as westward movement, sustained immigration to an area not quite so empty would demand the “belief that a good physical environment would wipe out the social and economic ills faced by cities and that well conceived physical development would prevent new urban communities from acquiring these problems.”⁹³ This, according to some scholars, is one reason that planners (and I would add real estate developers) focused so much creative attention on physical environment in Western cities, and

Special Cases,” in *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, William M. Sullivan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 244.

⁸⁸ Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: the Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 69-75.

⁸⁹ This point is brought out extensively by Norman Klein, in *History of Forgetting*, op. cit.

⁹⁰ Richard Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 277. Lehan contends that the “arc of Enlightenment” moved westward from Europe, culminating at the Pacific Coast of the United States.

⁹¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *American Historical Association Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1893), 199-227, in *Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner: Frontier and Section* (Ray Allen Billington, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1961), 37-62.

⁹² David C. Ranney, *Planning and Politics in the Metropolis* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), 42.

⁹³ *ibid.*

that so many imaginative solutions to the Eastern problems of urban living arose on the Pacific Coast.^{94 95}

What then did it really mean to plan a city in 1893? The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, after an unsuccessful attempt to become influential in the 1870s,⁹⁶ reorganized in 1888, (the same year that Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was published) and set as its objective "the promotion of Los Angeles and Southern California."⁹⁷ Promoting the city meant setting goals for economic and population growth, of course, but it also meant identifying, attracting, and retaining individuals who possessed innate characteristics that would make them superior citizens. Growth was never conceived as a process that should be unmanaged. As boosters contended in a two-hundred page pamphlet published in 1897, "The seed precedes the plant, the shrub the tree no less certainly than the discovery and the peopling lead the expansion and high estate of country and city."⁹⁸ Metaphorically, the westernization of California and the growth of Los Angeles were naturalized – planted into existence.

The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce used this formulation again in 1912, when it published an orange industry promotion subtitled, "From Seed to Consumer."⁹⁹ In a narrow sense this pamphlet was only discussing the production of citrus products; but its broader

⁹⁴ Throughout this study it will become clear that the boundaries between "city planning" and "real estate development" are indistinct. See Marc Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: the American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (2002) for a discussion of occupational categorization.

⁹⁵ Jon Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 3. Teaford applies this explanation to the development of what he calls "panaceas," internationally – not just on the Pacific Coast, where I have focused his observation.

⁹⁶ While the origin of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce is often given as 1888 (this was, in fact, a reorganization, not a beginning), booster A.T. Hawley in his 1876 pamphlet *The Present Condition, Growth, Progress, and Advantages of Los Angeles City and County, Southern California*, discusses the activities of the Chamber in the 1870s. In fact, the pamphlet was published "by authority of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce" in July 1876.

⁹⁷ "Los Angeles: the Old and the New," supplement to *Western Insurance News*, Volume 8, No. 12, 1911.

⁹⁸ Atchison and Eshelman, *Los Angeles Then and Now Illustrated* (Los Angeles: Geo, Rice and Sons Press, Inc., 1897), 8.

⁹⁹ Citrus Protection League of California, *Orange Culture in Southern California: "From Seed to Consumer"* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1912).

implications were clear – the impulse generating good consumers could be planted, nurtured, grown, and harvested. It was not uncommon for early boosters to conflate botanical and social “breeding.” Just as hearty and desirable strains of roses could be selected to improve subsequent generations, so could a society plan and choose the stock that would advance civilization from one generation to the next.

In fact, these same boosters asserted that the natural environment itself had selected specific locations as sites for high civilization. “It is a well-established law,” they insisted, “that where conditions exist which resulted in building up great cities, that similar influences elsewhere must result.”¹⁰⁰ So Los Angeles, it seemed, was destined by nature, by “isothermal actuation,” for greatness. Boosters concluded that any site with the same mean temperature as Babylon, Athens, Sparta, and Rome was likely to become a place where “the human race reaches and maintains its highest development.”¹⁰¹ Perhaps these observations were dubiously scientific, but they were marvelous marketing – and the persuasive argument for Los Angeles growth was, if nothing else, early modern marketing at its peak. This expectation that California offered new immigrants a successful life by virtue of its location was inherently utopian, but within its utopia were the seeds of its own demise, for the expectation of perpetual success was bound to remain unfulfilled.¹⁰²

Los Angeles would still need a great deal of labor to mold it into a major metropolis, but the twentieth century brought with it a more precisely developed framework delineating the boundaries of social order. This was a framework based on social interpretations of Darwin’s

¹⁰⁰Citrus Protection League, 29.

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰² David Wyatt, *Five Fires: Race, Catastrophe, and the Shaping of California* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 158. As scholar David Wyatt reminds us, “At the same time that California attracted immigrants with a dream of home ownership, a good job, and a place in the sun, it indentured many of them into an economy precariously based on growth and bigness.”

theories of evolution, particularly as conveyed by Herbert Spencer's neo-Lamarckian notions of progress and race. Los Angeles might be built in part by Filipinos and Japanese (who were higher in the social order than Chinese, Mexicans, African Americans, or Indians), but it was going to be a world of opportunity for Anglos. In fact, even within the ideologies of Southland socialists and radicals such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman or Kate Crane Gartz, the key precondition for utopian civilization was racial homogeneity. Most socialists affirmed Anglo-Saxon supremacy, and even the few who did not, still believed that new colonies could not be socially diverse.¹⁰³ Planners and builders conceived of reorganizing space in Los Angeles, but space was intended to form a white utopia.¹⁰⁴

The fin de siècle articulation of racial uniformity as a foundation for utopia represented a subtle change from early nineteenth century ideas about social order. Whereas earlier concepts aligned complex configurations of race on rungs of a social ladder, the modern consciousness shifted this to an evolutionary interpretation that delineated a new binary: winners and losers – and losers were destined to disappear.¹⁰⁵ This was an almost inevitable outcome of the popular reading of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, the subtitle of which was *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.¹⁰⁶ Recently, some historians, in fact, avoid separating the idea of "social" Darwinism from "scientific" Darwinism, insisting that this is a false binary.

In line with this conclusion, I am dropping the "social" and following historian Malinda

¹⁰³Often expressed as "cultural homogeneity," the terms culture, race, and language, if not interchangeable, were overlapping and interconnected during the late nineteenth century. While racial hierarchy was scientifically delineated as a result of Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*, its importance in social progress was being replaced by the idea of cultural homogeneity. See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 23.

¹⁰⁴Barbara Hooper, "'Split at the Roots': A Critique of the Philosophical and Political Sources of Modern Planning Doctrine," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1992), 45-80.

¹⁰⁵George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817 – 1914* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1972), 230.

¹⁰⁶As Gertrude Himmelfarb pointed out in her 1959 study, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, "the subtitle of the *Origin* also made a convenient motto for racists." Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1959), 416.

Lindquist's contention that "Darwinism naturalized social and economic divisions and political subordinations in the name of white, manly civilizational advancement."¹⁰⁷ Since Darwinism became a predominant discursive space during the period when all socialist theories except for Marxism were developing, most twentieth-century socialists inherently assumed the fundamental constructions of Darwinism.¹⁰⁸ In the Darwinian discourse, homogeneity became more important to maintaining social order than hierarchy.¹⁰⁹ Racial hierarchy would continue to be invoked opportunistically (especially by capitalists requiring labor resources), but planning a better society increasingly demanded theories that would frame homogeneous societies.

While Darwinism improved people's understanding of biology, it did little to suggest improvements to racial relations. In fact, as Lindquist observed, Darwinism "was, if nothing else, an economic doctrine which placed capitalism at the heart of white male supremacy and used the language of evolution and natural selection to evade and naturalize the gross inequalities experienced in industrial societies."¹¹⁰ California utopian writer/reformer R.A. Dague captured this popular misconception succinctly in his 1903 novel, *Henry Ashton*, when the foil for his socialist philosophy insisted that "the modern and more scientific doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest' has taken the place of ancient and impracticable Socialist teachings." This is clearly exemplified in natural history, insists Dague's character, George Batty, where we can see that, "from the protoplasm to man, we behold evidence of the strong overpowering the weak. It is always the fittest that survive. It is according to a law of nature."¹¹¹ Still, just like California,

¹⁰⁷Malinda Alaine Lindquist, *Race, Social Science and the Crisis of Manhood, 1890-1970* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 13.

¹⁰⁸David Stack, *The First Darwinian Left: Socialism and Darwinism 1859-1914* (Cheltenham, GB: New Clarion Press, 2003), 2.

¹⁰⁹Historian Mae Ngai contends that "the nativism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century comprised a cultural nationalism in which cultural homogeneity more than race superiority was the principal concern."Ngai, 23.

¹¹⁰Lindquist, 33.

¹¹¹ R.A. Dague, *Henry Ashton: the Thrilling Story of How the Famous Co-Operative Commonwealth was Established in Zanland* (Alameda, CA: R.A. Dague, 1903), 12.

Dague's literary island utopia, intended to demonstrate that a proper reading of socialism and evolutionary theory did not overturn progress toward socialist cooperation, ignored the issue of race relations.

Dague's Californian utopia was one of more than two-hundred literary projects to define a better society that were written between 1888 and 1900, following the popular success of Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward*.¹¹² *Looking Backward* presented the picture of a future America, narrated by a time-traveler, Julian West, who awakened in the year 2000 from a sleep he began in 1887. American society had non-violently transitioned from capitalism to socialism, class differences had evaporated, gender equality had made some progress, and everyone was employed. The future offered technologies that enabled more leisure and mass access to high culture. In fact, nearly all social problems that would have troubled Bellamy in the late nineteenth century had been solved in the twenty-first century – except for racial inequality. Actually, Bellamy did not predict anything at all about race; he was silent about the issue, and colorblind with regard to painting his picture of a better world.

Bellamy's only representation of an African-American character appeared in the nineteenth century prequel to Julian West's century long sleep (and here the character was, predictably, a loyal servant). *Looking Backward* contains only twenty-six occurrences of the word "race," and none of them even begin to imply the existence of any racial diversity. By the year 2000 there are no mentions or even hints of any other race besides Anglo-Saxons. Instead of a pre-Darwinian racial hierarchy, Bellamy has forecast the absence, or erasure, of African Americans. Dague's literary utopia follows Bellamy in this regard.

¹¹² Kenneth Roemer, *The Obsolete Necessity: America in Utopian Writings, 1888-1900* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1976).

This shift, in both literary and material worlds, was driven by applying Darwinism to the emergence of the city, which was rapidly becoming the locus of economic and social opportunity. Bellamy's vision essentially imagined an America where urban and rural environments had equal cultural status and quality of life. This he accomplished by bringing opportunities for consumption, technology, and high culture to the countryside without the multi-racial realism that seemed to disturb the tranquility of big cities. Though he was not anti-technology, as is clear from the many consumer-focused gadgets he invented in his fiction, Bellamy was anti-urban, and he hoped to rehabilitate the small-town environments that were dear to him.¹¹³

Historian Leo Marx contends that negotiating a balance between the machine and the virtues of a pastoral life is a conflict as old as America itself, noting that "the American population of the future," according to one writer in the early nineteenth century, "will 'possess a large share of the knowledge, refinement, and polish of a city, united to the virtue and purity of the country.'"¹¹⁴ This is precisely the goal of Edward Bellamy's utopian dream in 1888, as well as the goal of many astute real estate developers in the greater Los Angeles area.

The language of fiction, it is often argued, among its other attributes, is an instrument for expressing fundamental changes in perceptions of reality.¹¹⁵ Romantic, utopian, and realist fiction, when it imagined and inspired ways to cope with future cities, invariably proposed whiteness as the solution and as the very emblem of progress. Though Bellamy's novels and essays may never have defined or classified human races, as did the work of race scientists, the

¹¹³ Arthur E. Morgan, *Edward Bellamy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 205.

¹¹⁴ Charles Caldwell, "Thoughts on the Moral and Other Indirect Influences of Rail-Roads," *New England Magazine*, II (April, 1832), 288-300, in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 195.

¹¹⁵ Robert Alter, *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 6.

very absence of color shows “an assumption of whiteness as the civilized status of skin.”¹¹⁶ By erasing people of color from the future, *Looking Backward* implicitly suggested that the solution to urban problems, and the precondition for civilization to progress, was white racial homogeneity.

If Bellamy himself was almost mute on the issue of race, many of his socialist contemporaries, and the majority of those who followed him (or, as he conceded, led him) into Nationalist politics, were not so silent.¹¹⁷ Beginning with the civil rights era Americans began to associate anti-racism with progressivism, but during earlier periods imagining an alternative social order did not mean imagining a racially equal one. Bellamyism was one of the most active and materially focused utopian movements of the late nineteenth century, but while it was an incubator for socialists like H. Gaylord Wilshire, Eugene Debs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Thorstein Veblin, and Daniel De Leon, it also had plenty of room for Thomas Dixon, whose literary trilogy *The Leopard's Spots*, *The Clansman*, and *The Traitor* inspired the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan in the twentieth century. Dixon, in fact, wrote to Bellamy in support of Nationalism sometime in the early 1890s, promising that “you can depend on it [that] my voice will lock arms with my breath and my ballot lock arms with my voice in the issues now to come.”¹¹⁸ Dixon’s literary work would ultimately be the catalyst for a resurgent Ku Klux Klan, and Southern California, while it had only indirectly participated in the national discourse about

¹¹⁶ Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 29.

¹¹⁷ Edward Bellamy, “How I Came To Write *Looking Backward*,” *The Nationalist a Monthly Magazine* (Boston: The Nationalist Educational Association, 1889), 1. Bellamy always claimed that he had not originally intended *Looking Backward* to be taken as a reformist manifesto, but once he saw its reception, he became actively and thoroughly involved in political reform – capitalizing on the perception of him that readers had invented.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr. to the Editor *New Nation*, October 20, 189?, on printed letterhead, “Twenty-third St. Baptist Church, Association Hall, New York, Thomas Dixon, Jr., Pastor, 343 West 23rd Street,” Houghton Library, Hou B MS Am 1181, Box 2 (173-319), Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

slavery, wasted no time in demonstrating that, in the twentieth century, its geography was part of an Anglo-Saxon future.¹¹⁹

Southern California both nurtured its own Klan movement and, through its Hollywood identity, played a role in stimulating the Ku Klux Klan's national reemergence. D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* – one of the early pictures to be entirely filmed in Los Angeles – was the screen adaptation of Dixon's novel *The Clansman*. *Birth of a Nation* played well in Southern California, opening to rave reviews acclaiming D.W. Griffith as a modern theatrical star; the “successor to Augustin Daly in a new field.”¹²⁰ As to its handling of the emotional issues viewers would be faced with regarding the Civil War, a theatrical promotion for its showing in the Orange County city of Santa Ana noted that “it treats impartially the causes for which each side was struggling and indicates the political conditions in both the North and the South during these struggles.”¹²¹ The three color brochure used even more laudatory language to praise Griffith's portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan itself, highlighting the fact that the movie would be “showing the organization of the famous Ku Klux Klan and its motives,” and exclaiming that “three thousand of these famous white hooded riders are shown in their spectacular rides.”¹²² The nation had

¹¹⁹ That Southern California, in fact, may have been very predisposed to entering the Union as a slave state has long been discussed by historians and contemporary observers. Hinton Helper's comments are notorious (as was he, since his virulent anti-slavery coupled with virulent white supremacy made him a pariah in both North and South). Perhaps more credible is the 1903 account by Rev. John Wells Brier, who was a survivor of the devastated Death Valley Party of 1849. Brier recalls that, “shortly after our arrival [in Los Angeles] a number of Southern bloods decided to assert authority upon the negroes employed by our house. One of them was staked down on his back, sorely beaten and left, undiscovered, and without food or drink during four days and nights. Our steward – a tall and powerful black man – escaped from his enemies by leaping over a wall eight feet high, while the bullets whistled about him. A mulatto was brutally flogged, and the most trifling negro I ever saw was so tremendously aroused by fear that he distanced pursuit and did not rest till he was safe in Northern California.” Rev. John Wells Brier, “The Death Valley Party of 1849,” *Out West Magazine*, Vol. XVIII (March & April 1903) Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 74, Folder 15, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

¹²⁰ Augustin Daly was at the time considered to be the greatest theatrical director America had produced and was known for severely disciplining actors and for his social commentary.

¹²¹ “The Clansman or the Birth of a Nation – D.W. Griffith's Marvelous Photographic Spectacle in Twelve Reels,” Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 64, Folder 19, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

¹²² *ibid.*

indeed diligently struggled to discursively reintegrate North and South following the failure of Reconstruction, but Southern California may have been especially receptive to Thomas Dixon's Anglo-progressivism.¹²³

Klan valorization in Orange and Los Angeles counties was not confined to the screen. In 1915, just after the first public showing of *Birth of a Nation*, a "new" Klan incorporated in Atlanta and announced that, "We solemnly declare to all mankind; that the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, incorporated, is the original Ku Klux Klan organized in the year 1866, and active during the Reconstruction period of American history; and by and under its corporate name is revived, remodeled and expanded into a ritualistic, fraternal, patriotic society of national scope."¹²⁴ The Klan's new rhetoric subsumed racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism in a discourse of racial science, biblical lore, and patriotism. In keeping with marketing standards of the time, the movement quickly formed a Junior Order and independent Woman's organization.¹²⁵ "Especially in California," Klan leaders declared, "you may readily see and understand why we have developed our strength and power in this great state to a magnitude that has placed us in the limelight for accomplishing a very great notable work."¹²⁶ A pastor of one church in Los Angeles claimed seven hundred Klan members in his congregation alone, and a

¹²³Paradoxically, the movie industry censorship committee, the National Board of Censorship, withdrew the permit to show *Birth of a Nation* in Chicago after complaints about the film's racism were received. This decision was overturned by Judge William Fennimore Cooper, who issued an injunction prohibiting the city of Chicago from suppressing the film. This decision was hailed by industry insiders for stopping the censors from making radical decisions, yet the industry still prohibited films from depicting "crime [that] is obvious and shocks the spectator, the shooting in cold blood of any people, or any crime that portrays a unique method of execution." Industry regulations also warned filmmakers that "all vulgarity and suggestion must be avoided." See Louella O. Parsons, *How to Write for the Movies* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1916), 189.

¹²⁴Pamphlet, *Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, incorporated* (Atlanta: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., 1922), Ku Klux Klan Realm of California 1922-1947, SC/KCR, Box 1, Folder 6, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

¹²⁵Bylaws demanded that no male Klan members play any role in establishing, supporting, or directing the Women's organization, and the Klan would only sanction women's chapters that were originated by women.

¹²⁶Letter from C. W. Taylor, Jr, California State Commander to the California membership, SC/KCR, Box 1, Folder 3Ku Klux Klan Realm of California 1922-1947, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

flyer for a Klan “Fiesta” in Fresno advertised seating for thirty-eight thousand people and special rates on the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads.¹²⁷

Though the Klan could only be described as utopian by imagining a tortured use of the term, some social and political perspectives were common to both thought systems. While such commonality may seem surprising, this may well be because our cultural memory of the Klan is dominated by the horrendous acts associated with the first incarnation of the organization during the Reconstruction Era. The second Klan movement, which was much larger than the first, included many elements that were different from the original Reconstruction-Era organization.¹²⁸ The California Realm of the Klan, for example, like many Nationalists and socialist groups, was particularly vocal in its support for the funding of public education, the separation of church and state, and surprisingly enough, equal rights for women.¹²⁹ Thomas Dixon, similarly, was a political progressive in many respects (some of which were not shared with the Klan, including his vocal opposition to anti-Semitism). Dixon’s support for Nationalist and Klan issues personifies the claim that Bellamyite utopianism and the longing for a better society though racial purity could cohabitate comfortably.¹³⁰ Consequently, it is not surprising that such seemingly incongruous social ideas also could influence community building in Southern California.

¹²⁷Special Fiesta Bulletin under the auspices of Fresno Klan Number Two, n.d. (circa 1923-24), signed T.C. Moore, SC/KCR, Box 1, Folder 16, Ku Klux Klan Realm of California 1922-1947, Oviatt Library Special Collection and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

¹²⁸Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992), xi.

¹²⁹In one of the few overt political party endorsements in a western Klan newspaper, the reporter names a California senator who is opposing a Congressional bill on equal rights for men and women sponsored by the National Woman’s party. He exhorts readers to “write your senator about this.” No byline, “Who would fight this,” *The Western Citizen*, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 24, 1924, SC/KCR, Box 1, Folder 18, Ku Klux Klan Realm of California 1922-1947, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

¹³⁰Dixon was a lifelong friend of Woodrow Wilson and shared much of his progressive agenda, as well as his racist beliefs. (Woodrow Wilson’s favorite movie was said to be *Birth of a Nation*, which was screened for him in the White House.)

Without doubt, many Nationalist readers and contributors shared Thomas Dixon's views about race, as is evident in a number of articles and letters to the editor. One feature article, written for the movement's national magazine in February 1890, just as Nationalists were gaining momentum in California, exemplified what must have been a common Nationalist perspective about African Americans. The author asked the question, "ought we to wish the negro to marry our daughter or his daughter to marry our son?" To this semi-anonymous Nationalist (believed to be New York social worker and novelist Katherine Pearson Woods) the answer was obvious, "No ! For wholesale intermarriage would in the first place soon banish the black man from America, and a race of octoroons would be but a poor exchange."¹³¹

The Nationalist solution prefigured the economic empowerment of Garveyism, but proposed an African American state within the United States, suggesting that "it would be easy to set apart a sufficient territory—presumably in the far South— as the Afro-American's peculiar heritage, within which he should, as far as possible, be left to govern himself. Not that he should be in any sense abandoned, or cast adrift; on the contrary the negro contingent should form an integral part of the industrial force, officered from its own ranks and with its fair and proportionate voice in all questions of general importance."¹³² While the fundamental principle of Bellamyism's industrial army proposed that each individual should labor at the occupation for which he or she was best suited by talent and interest, African Americans, in this writer's formulation, would "naturally" participate in the cultivation of cotton, rice, and sugar.

¹³¹The author of "Metzerott, Shoemaker," aka Katherine Pearson Woods, "The Negro's Part," *The Nationalist*, Vol.2, No. 3 (February 1890), 94.

¹³² *ibid.*, 97.

The popularity of Nationalism, and the wide participation of ordinary Bellamy Club members in the discourse about race, is one piece of evidence that white supremacy was not a concept-from-above that elites showered on an unreceptive mass of workers.¹³³ Failing to address the race issue inherently perpetuated an unequal social structure; when utopian plans offered a better world in which people of color were never visible, it was consequently not an act of racelessness. As many letters to the editor of the *Nationalist* illustrate, even among socialists work and leisure were dimensions of identity that were intertwined with whiteness, and the radical masses could be more vocally racist than the reporters or columnists who represented Bellamy's ideas in the weekly press.

While the race issue was only occasionally addressed within Bellamyism, there clearly were aspects of feminism that took root among those whose introduction to social causes came through reading *Looking Backward*, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman would later recall. Gilman's ideas form an important connection between Bellamyism and feminism, and one that pinpoints an intersection of these two movements in the Los Angeles area, for Gilman, along with Upton Sinclair and Kate Crane Gartz, made her residence in Pasadena where a radical salon culture nurtured philanthropy and political discussion.

Perhaps it was in the idyllic gardens of what E.W. Stillwell & Co. called the area's world renowned bungalows, where "home planning and home building [were] fine arts,"¹³⁴ that Gilman began to conceptualize a new way to articulate a feminist message. The home, in fact, became the center of her argument. "The home has not developed in proportion to our other institutions," Gilman declared, "and by its rudimentary condition it arrests development in other

¹³³ Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 49.

¹³⁴ E.W. Stillwell, *West Coast Bungalows* (Los Angeles: E.W. Stillwell & Co, 1910).

lines.”¹³⁵ Gilman engaged in a project to define what she called the real home – not what society claimed was essential in a home, but what was ideal.

Gilman juxtaposed the radical technological change in home-building and home styles with the little change she observed in the governing processes of the home. This is an arena, she concluded, where evolution had not taken hold. In Gilman’s deft argument the home is used as a synecdoche for what nineteenth-century men called the domestic sphere – the domain in which women operated. It is this construct that Gilman seeks to overthrow, noting that “the matchbox [meaning technology] has freed the housewife from that incessant service, but the *feeling* that women should stay at home is with us yet.”¹³⁶ Gilman concluded her feminist treatise by asking how a woman might best benefit her family. Is it, she asks, “by staying home and doing what she can with her own two hands – whereby no family ever has more than the labor of one affectionate amateur can provide – or by enlarging her motherhood as man has enlarged his fatherhood and giving to her family the same immense advantages he has given it?”¹³⁷ This suggestion about a necessary evolution in social relations extends well beyond the position that Bellamy assumed in any of his writings, but nevertheless, what many radical women, including Gilman, read into Bellamy was more compatible with feminist ideals than were other contemporary political movements.

In 1913 the radical author Floyd Dell wrote about Gilman that “of the women who represent and carry on this many-sided movement [feminism] today, the first to be considered from this masculine viewpoint should, I think, be Charlotte Perkins Gilman.” He continued by asserting that she was “the most intransigent feminist of them all,” and, to Dell, Gilman was “the

¹³⁵ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Home, Its Work and Influence* (New York: The Charlton Company, 1910), 10.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 37.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 314.

one most exclusively concerned with the improvement of the lot of women.”¹³⁸ Yet even Gilman herself never recognized a connection between racial and gender oppression – her political and economic theories relied on a nineteenth-century racial construct of white supremacy, and, in fact, she was an enthusiastic supporter of eugenic theories even as she wrote her feminist utopian novel, *Herland*.¹³⁹

In Gilman’s philosophy “socialism was,” as one recent historian has noted, “to be the evolutionary destiny of only white Americans and Western Europeans.”¹⁴⁰ This was, of course, to be socialism of Gilman’s own making, for she considered Marxism to be a perversion of valid philosophy, and blamed the Russian Revolution for the American peoples’ rejection of the doctrine, declaring that socialism “has been fairly obliterated in the public mind by the Jewish-Russian nightmare, Bolshevism.”¹⁴¹ The association of Jews with Bolshevism was more commonly articulated by non-socialists, but Gilman’s socialist critique is very much a part of the nativist discourse aimed at reducing the immigration of undesirable (southern and eastern European) “races” that culminated in the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924.¹⁴² Like Bellamy, Gilman ignored non-whites (and Jews) in her manufactured utopia, *Herland*, and in the material

¹³⁸ Floyd Dell, *Women As World Builders: Studies in Modern Feminism* (Chicago: Forbes and Company, 1913), 22.

¹³⁹ Gilman’s views align with eugenic science in regard to racial differences in human abilities, but her construct of feminist eugenics does not conform to the general positions on social reform, such as feminism, socialism, or mothers’ pensions that Paul Popenoe articulated in the classic 1918 textbook *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918). As to the connection and differences between “scientific eugenics” and “eugenic feminism,” see Mary Ziegler, “Eugenic Feminism: Mental Hygiene, The Woman’s Movement and the Campaign for Eugenic Legal Reform, 1900-1935,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 211-235

¹⁴⁰ Mark Pittenger, *American Socialists and Evolutionary Thought, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 85.

¹⁴¹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York: Harper Celephon Books, 1975), 320.

¹⁴² See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 17-55, for a discussion of how immigration restriction shifted the regime of racial classification in the United States during the 1920s.

world she relocated to Connecticut in 1922 so as not to be confronted by the presence of so many “aliens” as she observed in Pasadena and New York.¹⁴³

But unlike Bellamy, whose views on race are only opaquely visible to us, Gilman was explicit. In the July 1908 edition of the *American Journal of Sociology*, she provided what she entitled “A Suggestion on the Negro Problem,” contending that “We have to consider the unavoidable presence of a large body of aliens, of a race widely dissimilar and in many respects inferior, whose present status is to us a social injury.”¹⁴⁴ Gilman’s solution to this social problem seems clearly to be based on Bellamy’s idea of the industrial army, for she recommends that all African Americans below some unstated level of social advancement be conscripted into an army of laborers, farmers, and millers under the direct management of the state. Gilman does concede the possibility of individuals being educated to transcend these circumstances, and suggests that bright children should attend schools for domestic servants to facilitate this uplift. She is not entirely deterministic with regard to the potential of the African-American race, and her ideas are based more on a Lamarckian interpretation of the relationship between environment and character, but her practical solutions are only slightly less harsh than other white-supremacist proposals.

Paradoxically, Gilman’s explicit theorizing about the “Negro Problem” along with her conflation of Jewishness and Bolshevism helps to explain a spillover effect that anti-immigration laws had on African Americans (and ultimately Mexican Americans) in general, and in Southern California in particular. Such an explanation is necessary because, while there was an undeniably severe racist dimension to community building in Los Angeles since its very formation, many

¹⁴³Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 50; also in Pittinger, *American Socialists*, 87.

¹⁴⁴Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “A Suggestion on the Negro Problem,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (July 1908): 78-85.

historians have observed that the scope of the color line widened and its nature hardened even more concretely in the 1920s. It was during this period that the immigration quotas proposed by the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924 established a social system in which “illegal immigration” became the dominant issue in determining the legitimacy of an individual’s U.S. residency and potential citizenship.¹⁴⁵ It created, according to historian Mae Ngai, a system in the United States that delineated “racial boundaries of citizenship.”¹⁴⁶ As the Anti-Chinese legislation of 1882 and California’s Alien Land Law of 1913 illustrated, while the law itself might be complex and nuanced with regard to individual eligibility for citizenship, the quota formulations created the perception that entire races were ineligible for citizenship and, hence, relegated to permanent alien status – even if some individuals actually had achieved citizenship. This discursive and perceptual connection between race and alienation was magnified by the passage of immigration quotas in the early 1920s.

Furthermore, the system naturalized (paradoxically) the relationship among race, national origins, and citizenship. Immigrant quotas assigned by the Quota Board looked at natural origins within the context of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Johnson-Reed Act and applied categories established in the 1920 Census, including: white, black, mulatto, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Hindu. In practice, the Quota Board eliminated all non-white “nationalities” from its immigration formula, for U.S. descendants of slaves were not associated with African origin (thereby eliminating natives of African countries from quota percentages) and people of Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Siamese descent were all deemed ineligible for citizenship. As Mae Ngai points out, this had the effect of placing people of color “outside the concept of nationality and,

¹⁴⁵ Ngai, 17.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

therefore, citizenship.”¹⁴⁷ The implication of the immigration formulation, then, was to promote the concept of whiteness as the only race eligible for U.S. citizenship. The literary erasure of non-white races that became so thorough during this period aligned systematically with the legal, biological, and discursive concepts of race that had been evolving with respect to science and civil law ever since the late nineteenth century.

Though race never transcended these limitations, in *Looking Backward* Bellamy went to considerable lengths to redefine domestic space in a future society. It is clear that he never really envisioned the kind of equality that feminists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman were advocating, and he unquestionably reproduced the typical idea of separate spheres that constrained male and female social roles. He did, however, express practical ideas about how women could achieve immediate benefits from what he called “cooperative housekeeping.” Here Bellamy and those who accepted these principles transcended the commercial cooperation of the era. Cooperation became a theory to equalize at least some aspects of gender relations.

According to urban planning historian Dolores Hayden, Bellamy “exhorted women to organize cooperative laundries and kitchens.”¹⁴⁸ Bellamy’s novels and speeches did seem to have some influence, and throughout the nation there were many examples of new social institutions that attributed their inspiration to Edward Bellamy.¹⁴⁹ There is no doubt that Bellamy did advocate these domestic advances, but he was not the innovator of such concepts. Rather, he

¹⁴⁷ Ngai, 27.

¹⁴⁸ Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981), 148.

¹⁴⁹ For a discussion of Fanny Fuller’s establishment of a cooperative boarding club in Decatur, Illinois, several cooperative family dining clubs, Frances Willard’s training school for domestic work, and the start-up of the New England Kitchen, which was an experimental laboratory designed to provide food at low cost by improving cooking appliances, see Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*.

joined an existing feminist dialogue that was vibrant, long lasting, and extensive, especially in the Boston area where Bellamy made his home.¹⁵⁰

Scholars often situate Bellamy in the vanguard of litterateurs addressing the issue of women's rights, maintaining that he was the first English language writer to assert an equal place for women in a new "socialist" society.¹⁵¹ There is no doubt that Bellamy's literary message was well received by women; they became predominant in the political movement that was drawn from *Looking Backward*, and women actually founded the first important Bellamy club in Los Angeles.¹⁵² I contend, however, that this interpretation overstates Bellamy's actual position on feminism. His ideas are at best a bridge between nineteenth-century patriarchy and the types of radical changes in social relations between men and women that would be promoted in other alternative societies, like the new socialist ideals evidenced in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.¹⁵³

Historian Sylvia Strauss also has pointed out that even what could be construed as Bellamy's early support for universal women's suffrage "fell by the wayside as he elaborated his socialist society."¹⁵⁴ In *Looking Backward* women did participate in many public aspects of society, but in the industrial army (which was Bellamy's ubiquitous state employment administration) they worked under an entirely separate regime, which was managed by a female general-in-chief who could achieve no higher office. It was only within this regime that women

¹⁵⁰ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: a Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 138.

¹⁵¹ Mary Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 76.

¹⁵² *ibid.*

¹⁵³ Ironically, the idea of the "Modern Girl" who expressed freedom and equality through consumption and fashion was countered in the Soviet Union by a revolutionary identity that eschewed women's fashion and tended to emulate men's hair style and clothing. See Anne E. Gorsuch, "The Dance Class or the Working Class – The Soviet Modern Girl," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, ed. by Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn M. Thomas, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 185-189.

¹⁵⁴ Sylvia Strauss, "Gender, Class, and Race in Utopia," *Looking Backward, 1888 – 1888*, ed. by Daphne Patai (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 76.

achieved suffrage. Many historians, I believe, read these passages of *Looking Backward* as being more supportive of broad-based political suffrage than Bellamy actually intended. Bellamy viewed the differences between men and women as immutable, and there is even a passage in *Looking Backward* where Dr. Leete criticizes feminists of the nineteenth century for having overreached in their demand for equality of the sexes.¹⁵⁵ There is little doubt that this is Bellamy's own critique of nineteenth-century feminism, articulated through Dr. Leete's voice.

In spite of Bellamy's lukewarm agreement with important principles of the women's movement, many prominent feminists joined the newly formed Bellamy Clubs in Boston and Southern California. During the tenure of the clubs, in fact, many women would serve as officers, but the first meeting of one Los Angeles Club (there were thirty-three in Los Angeles alone at the peak of popularity) was not quite so open-minded. An anonymous *Los Angeles Times* reporter, while writing an uncharacteristically positive (for the *Times*) column about the new Nationalist Club's first meeting in June of 1889, which was most notable because Bellamy was declared "to be the Moses leading us out of bondage," inadvertently exposed certain gender dynamics that operated even within this radical group.¹⁵⁶ About fifty people attended the meeting, according to the reporter, and the group selected a chairman. It was Ralph E. Hoyt, who as it turns out, "said he had not read Mr. Bellamy's book as yet, still his wife had read it and he could say he was in sympathy with its statements in advance of having read it."¹⁵⁷ Such articles illustrate that, while women may indeed have been the driving forces behind the formation of Bellamy clubs, they often remained in the background – an observation that resonates in radical movements throughout the twentieth century.

¹⁵⁵ Strauss, "Gender," 77.

¹⁵⁶ "Utopians: Another Meeting of the National Club," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1889.

¹⁵⁷ Strauss, "Gender," 77.

Even so, by 1890 Anna Ferry Smith had been appointed club organizer for all of Southern California and the small Ventura club could claim two women officers and several more women on the executive board who had been “active in the old anti-slavery days.”¹⁵⁸ The *Nationalist* editor promoted “the crusade for industrial emancipation” as a continuation of the old anti-slavery campaign in which women had been so active, and Bellamy’s frequent publication in both *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal* demonstrated that Nationalists were intent on reaching a wide audience of women.¹⁵⁹

In the domain of domestic labor, where Bellamy was a vocal supporter of reform, he did seek to reduce women’s burden and to equalize men’s and women’s responsibilities in the home. Many of Southern California’s residential architectural experiments were modeled to achieve this, from the kitchenless “Bellamy” apartment buildings to Rudolph Schindler’s common-kitchen “cooperative home.”¹⁶⁰ These, along with many others, can trace their roots to the nascent feminist ideas that Bellamy’s followers expressed.¹⁶¹

While they mostly ignored the kitchenless potential of futuristic apartment houses (though many did offer an on-site café where residents could take meals), by 1908 promotional brochures advertising the most elegant apartment buildings in America were tinged with Bellamyism. The authors of one such glossy three-hundred twelve page book defended the legitimacy of shared housing, asserting that “the duplex apartment is the creation of definitely modern art and architecture. It disdains the timid methods of the Nineteenth century. It answers,

¹⁵⁸Cyrus Willard, “The News of the Movement,” “California,” *The Nationalist*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (February 1890): 117.

¹⁵⁹ Hayden, *Domestic Revolution*, 48.

¹⁶⁰ Sally B. Woodbridge, *California Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988), 99.

¹⁶¹ While Bellamy is credited with popularizing the concept of kitchenless homes, he did not invent it. Like most of the supposedly futuristic technologies Bellamy described in his novels, versions of the kitchenless home actually existed at least fifteen years before Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*. Centralized kitchens and laundries were innovations that upper-class buildings, such as apartment-hotels, had been experimenting with since the 1870s. See Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream*, 138.

directly and completely, a demand that was previously not understood.”¹⁶² Shared walls – apartment living – were being promoted as the very emblem of modernity and the hallmark of a desirable future.

This transformation in the desirability and prestige of apartment living was stimulated by economic and demographic changes that occurred throughout the nation, but it also owed a debt to the popularity of Edward Bellamy’s architectural and social imaginaries, which legitimized these “homeplaces” as morally and socially acceptable. In the Southland the improvement in social status associated with apartment living was generally welcomed, for while the utopian booster ideology in Los Angeles was discursively aligned with a single family home for everyone, the reality was that multiple-family dwellings had always been prominent – and popular.¹⁶³

In 1912, in fact, one of Los Angeles’ more than four-hundred real estate development firms, called Ye Planry Building Company, headlined a display ad in the local monthly magazine *The American Globe*, with the simple title, “Apartment House Business Is Good.” The company claimed that “the most desirable lots in Los Angeles and the beaches” were lots that they controlled, and they planned to “build from 20 to 200 room Apartment Houses to suit desirable tenants.”¹⁶⁴

Two other prominent Los Angeles developers serve as a model for the transformation of residential-building styles. When J.B. Lilly and P.B. Fletcher founded the Suburban Development Company in December 1910, they made their living building “modern 5-room bungalow[s] with cement porch, hardwood floors, electric fixtures, gas connections and other

¹⁶²G.C. Hesselgren, *Apartments in the Metropolis* (New York: G.C. Hesselgren & Co., 1908), 7.

¹⁶³Todd Gish, “Building Los Angeles: urban housing in the suburban metropolis, 1900-1936,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Planning, University of Southern California, 2007, 47.

¹⁶⁴“Apartment House Business is Good,” *The American Globe*, Vol. 9, No. 6, (April 1912): 7.

modern innovations.”¹⁶⁵ By 1913, however, Lilly and Fletcher were “among the builders who specialized in Bungalow Courts,” (multi-family units) and were building fourteen suites, each with four rooms and baths in the area that is now South Los Angeles.¹⁶⁶ The business transformed again between 1913 and 1924, by which time Lilly and Fletcher were fully invested in apartment construction. The two partners in Suburban Development built the Gaylord Apartment Hotel at 3355 Wilshire Blvd. Within eyesight of the district’s prestigious Ambassador Hotel, the Gaylord was among the most elegant apartments in Los Angeles, with kitchens, but also a central commissary where residents and guests could take their meals.¹⁶⁷ The Gaylord, incidentally, still exists today.

The Gaylord was named after H. Gaylord Wilshire, the well known real estate mogul, socialist, and Bellamyite, though there is no evidence that Lilly or Fletcher expressed any particular political viewpoints. Still, naming this particular form of home style after Wilshire does seem at least to reflect on the architectural ideas that Wilshire admired, and these were without doubt informed by his convictions about a utopian socialist future. In H. Gaylord Wilshire, Los Angeles, and the city of Fullerton for that matter, had a man who had attempted to “act out” minor utopias in four dimensions; three associated with buildings and avenues; one with political action and electoral candidacy.

Of all the radical real estate men, to present-day Angelenos Gaylord Wilshire might seem to be the most surprising. Los Angeles’ Wilshire Blvd., named for its early owner, is an emblem of the modern capitalist city; it calls to mind nothing if not insurance companies, advertising agencies, and the “Miracle Mile” of big-city consumption depots. Fullerton’s Wilshire Blvd., on

¹⁶⁵ “Suburban Development Company will End First Quarter by Paying a Ten Per Cent Dividend,” *The American Globe*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (February 1911): 8.

¹⁶⁶ *Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer*, Vol. XII, No. 3, (November 22, 1913): 20.

¹⁶⁷ Brochure, Untitled, California Tourism and Promotion Collection, CTP Box 3, Folder 2, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

the other hand, seems only to be an average commercial street; perhaps, to tourists and most current residents, named to imitate the metropolis of Los Angeles.

But the history of the two towns are, in fact, connected through Henry Gaylord Wilshire; both streets are named for him, and he, in turn, named the two Commonwealth Streets (one in Los Angeles and one in Fullerton) after Edward Bellamy's "Cooperative Commonwealth" of the year 2000. Both cities have little memory of Wilshire's radical past; Fullerton has almost no memory of Wilshire's role as a major real estate developer at all. This lacuna is not a modern day circumstance – cities have been trying to erase Wilshire almost since the day he became a public figure.

Henry Gaylord Wilshire was a socialist. Certainly in theory, but also sometimes in practice: Wilshire was the first person to run for congress openly on a socialist ticket (the Bellamyite Nationalist Party) in 1890, and was active in founding Bellamy clubs in Downey and Clearwater (Paramount) California.¹⁶⁸ Still, even many socialists were critical of him, as Socialist Labor Party speaker H.J. Schade made clear in 1901. Speaking at a meeting of the Party in Los Angeles' Foresters' hall, Schade insisted that "H. Gaylord Wilshire is the monumental freak of Los Angeles." Both the terms "monumental" and "freak" had explicit meaning in Schade's rebuke, for he explained that "there is no sort of doubt about it. He is an egotist in the extreme sense of the word. Any man who posts his own picture on a billboard, with a smaller picture of the candidate for president under it, when he is only a candidate for congress, can do no good for the Socialist party. He does more harm."¹⁶⁹ Even the long time head of the Socialist Party, Norman Thomas, when asked about Wilshire in a 1968 interview, had nothing more to say

¹⁶⁸ Cyrus Willard, "News of the Movement," "California," *The Nationalist*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (March 1890), 180.

¹⁶⁹ "Called Wilshire Monumental Freak," *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume XXVIII, Number 12, January 21, 1901, accessed online July 14, 2014 at <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?>.

about him than “Gaylord was a member for a while.”¹⁷⁰ Still, by other accounts Wilshire was as sincere an activist as anyone else – and he did, in any event, give the territory that became Wilshire blvd. to the city of Los Angeles, with the provision that the street be named after him.

Another of Los Angeles’ more rural “satellite cities,” Sunland-Tujunga, on the other hand, does not have any streets named after the utopian real estate man who founded it, Marshall Valentine Hartranft, and if Wilshire was more of a socialist than real estate developer, Hartranft was the opposite. Hartranft held philosophy dear, but it was a philosophy of real estate planning, selling, owning, and financing. Yet his movement – and Hartranft did refer to his real estate development activities as a movement – stands out as a shining example of an attempt to transform the nature both of intentional communities and the towns or cities they bordered. Southern California sprouted several such settlements, and among the most sophisticated and illuminating of these was the Little Landers of Tujunga (Los Terrenitos), founded in 1913.

Officially, The Little Landers Colony of Los Terrenitos (later renamed Tujunga) was organized in 1913 “on lands purchased, under special contract, from M.V. Hartranft owner of the Western Empire Suburban Farms Association.”¹⁷¹ Hartranft, in an elaborate promotional brochure for his newest real estate endeavors, claimed that “The colonists, as individual purchasers, took land in acre, half-acre, and quarter-acre tracts on which they hoped to raise vegetables, fruit trees, bees, chickens, goats, and rabbits.”¹⁷² The colony was led by William

¹⁷⁰ Transcript of Alden Whitman’s interview with Norman Thomas, April 19, 1968, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

¹⁷¹ Marshall Hartranft, *The Western Empire Land-Banking and Home Securing Plan* (Fruit World Publishing Company: Los Angeles, January, 1911), 30, Marshall Hartranft folder, Sunland-Tujunga Little Land Historical Society, Bolton Hall Museum Collections, Tujunga, CA.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 30.

Smythe, a friend and follower of Bolton Hall, who was a Henry George single-tax advocate, activist on behalf of the poor, and colonizer in his own right.¹⁷³

If Marshall Hartranft was the commercial theorist behind Los Terrenitos, William Smythe was certainly its philosopher. Not a team that was in the end able to form utopia, but one that was inspiring in other ways, perhaps. What is most remarkable about the Little Lander project – and this is a characteristic it later shared with the Weeks Colony – was its conceptual origin in the everyday life of capitalism and the literary life of utopianism. In fact, “Los Angeles,” according to Smythe, was “the ideal metropolis of the Little Lander, not only because it furnishes a large, reliable, and rapidly expanding market for his surplus products, but because it supplies every facility for the satisfaction of his social instincts.”¹⁷⁴ Social instincts, according to Smythe, required wonderful stores, parks, music, literature, and art galleries – objects he found lacking in most rural settings, but which could be acquired in the city. Like Edward Bellamy and Charles Weeks, William Smythe believed that these necessary cultural productions could only be used appropriately when they were energized by the positive dimensions of the country. Place, morality, and happiness, in this philosophical framework, were mutually constituted.

This, indeed, is the underlying theme in Smythe’s 1921 book, *City Homes on Country Lanes: Philosophy and Practice of the Home-in-a-Garden*. It is a wonderful treatise providing some history of his utopian projects in California, but more than that it promotes the ideals that Smythe called “farm cities,” “garden cities,” and “garden homes.” It certainly drew from Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities concepts, but Smythe’s ideals for a new rural-urban way of

¹⁷³ In homage to Bolton Hall, Smythe named the colony’s stone clubhouse, “Bolton Hall.” It still stands today, and houses collections and archives from the Little Landers’ period.

¹⁷⁴ William E. Symthe, *The Little Landers of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: William E. Smythe, 1913), 14.

life were original and as eloquently described as readers would find in almost any popular city-literature of the period.

Smythe wanted Angelenos to live in an environment where “you are lifted out of yourself, out of the sordid things of every-day life.”¹⁷⁵ But this, he divined, could only be “the product of organized municipal life, rather than of the unorganized and severely individualistic forms of rural life that is [sic] passing away.”¹⁷⁶ Consequently, Smythe’s philosophy advocated neither pure city nor pure country as the ideal living space; he asserted that metropolitanism without the country defied human nature. Rather, what Smythe proposed, and in this there is an echo of Bellamy, was “a far reaching transformation in the whole rural life of the nation.”¹⁷⁷ To be sure, as rural residents migrated to cities, rural life was being transformed; but the isolation and irrelevance into which many small towns and rural regions had fallen was not the transformation Smythe had in mind. He, along with Bellamy, wanted to witness the resurrection of the village by promoting technological and moral advancement.

Architectural historians contend that during this period (roughly 1885 to 1915) “existing cities simply expanded.”¹⁷⁸ This movement has been characterized as “consolidation”; perhaps an analog to the rise of the trusts that was dominating business during the same era. In the case of Los Angeles it is easy to see this process in action. Today, the City/County consists of eighty-eight individual towns, many of which were annexed during this early period. In light of this, it is even more important to understand that the expansion of Los Angeles was not, as it is often

¹⁷⁵ William E. Smythe, *City Homes on Country Lanes: Philosophy and Practice of the Home-in-a-Garden* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 39-40.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 56.

¹⁷⁸ Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 213.

characterized, unaffected by trends and movements in town planning, architecture, and building, and moreover, rapid expansion was not achieved without lifestyle goals and resistance.¹⁷⁹

William Smythe did not resist incorporation, but he did promote his notion of rural-urban synthesis as the practical ideal that successfully could bring the edge districts into the city.¹⁸⁰

“These vacant areas,” Smythe implored, “have been waiting for something – for something more valuable than the old order of rural life.”¹⁸¹ He called his new proposal, the “Era of the Garden Home,” and the pre-developed areas, he insisted, “constitute[d] the City Invisible.”¹⁸² Smythe believed that constructing such a city and lifestyle – a lifestyle designed to bring people happiness and security on “a little land,” was an art form. In fact, he asserted that his movement was “the dawning of the new art.”¹⁸³ The art was creative – valorizing individual and community sustainability on small lots – and scientific – promoting machines, new agricultural, cooking, and building techniques to bring Southern Californians’ “landed independence and self-expression.”¹⁸⁴ For science, William Smythe relied on Los Angeles residents C. L. Schufeldt, a home gardening teacher, and Luther Burbank, whose reputation as a plant breeder was universal, while his interest in human eugenics was less well publicized.

¹⁷⁹ It is also the case in Southern California specifically, that a great deal of annexation was due to the municipal water rights, both to the Owens Valley aqueduct and to surface water and aquifers, which the Los Angeles Municipal system monopolized after 1911. See John Walton, *Western Times and Water Wars: State, Culture, and Rebellion in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). See also William Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1900). Prior to his active engagement in forming utopian colonies, William Smythe published an illuminating work about water and civilization in which he declared “The essence of the industrial life which springs from irrigation is its democracy,” 42. Smythe had been the editor of *The Irrigation Age* before this.

¹⁸⁰ *Los Angeles Times* journalist John McKinney defines edge districts as “the rag-tag remnants of the natural world that surround the metropolis. Edges are the places that don’t quite fit, anomalies of metropolitan life.” See John McKinney, *Walking Los Angeles: Adventures on the Urban Edge* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 12.

¹⁸¹ William Smythe, *City Homes on Country Lanes: Philosophy and Practice of the Home-in-a-Garden* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 65.

¹⁸² *ibid.*

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 96.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

Smythe devoted an entire chapter to Luther Burbank, contending that “of all the persons mentioned in these pages, Mr. Burbank is the most significant.”¹⁸⁵ His admiration for Burbank’s work ran deep; Smythe asserted that plant-breeding was only Burbank’s superficial contribution. His real insight, according to Smythe, “goes to the heart of the problem of human life upon this planet.”¹⁸⁶ Intellectually walking through progressively deeper layers of Luther Burbank’s research, William Smythe concluded that better plants would lead to better food, which in turn, would lead to better living. “Better living,” Smythe insisted, “means better people.”¹⁸⁷ He interpreted the relationship between environment and human quality as being direct and causal, and his framework recapitulated Lamarckian evolution, ironically, by invoking the most genetically deterministic evidence of heredity (plant breeding). In fact, his ideas and Little Lander colony-building consistently pursued the principle that a better material world would create a better person.

Notably, Smythe dedicated a substantial amount of print in his twenty-seven page 1913 Los Terrenitos promotional pamphlet to describing the kind of people who he wanted to settle in Little Lander Colonies; the kind of people who would be “better people.” Class, occupations, and gender are all mentioned, and he noted that former social status would evaporate in the colony. There was, however, no mention at all of race; the utopian colony Llano del Rio in 1914 clearly excluded non-whites; the Weeks Colony ten years later also was explicit about racial restrictions, but Smythe was silent. It is all the more notable, because, as I will discuss more in chapter four, by 1921, after the colony failed, Hartranft continued to sell deeds for individual lots that had been part of the colony, and these were to be overtly and undeniably racially restricted.

¹⁸⁵ Smythe, *City Homes*, 103.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 104.

Smythe's writings provided no hints as to his ideas about race, a silence that was all too familiar among utopians from this period. African Americans were simply not part of the social network with which he interacted in Los Angeles, though it is hard to imagine that he could have been entirely oblivious to the race issue that had always been an undercurrent in Southern California. That the "Caucasians-only" message, not only in Tujunga, but in other intensive farming utopias as well, became more explicit in the 1920s may be related to the relatively large population of African Americans and Asians in Los Angeles, as well as the polarization that was developing around the "race problem" itself. It is also related, I contend, to the accelerated institutionalization of city-planning concepts and to the intensifying dialogue about "aliens." Los Angeles, in an era of racially based immigration quotas, was planning a white city.

The former colony of Tujunga, on the other hand, was isolated enough to be immune from any urban problems associated with race – the shift to explicitly anti-African-American language and real estate practices was not based on a real experience of conflict. It was, however, a necessary dimension of positioning the geography to be eligible for a plan of incorporation into Los Angeles. By 1932, Tujunga, with a rapidly growing white population, was annexed to Los Angeles and consolidated with Sunland, which had become part of L.A. six years earlier. The transition from utopian colony to an explicitly white mainstream suburb appears to have concluded quietly and seamlessly.

Anglo colonies like Los Terranitos manifested a perspective about race that, while not invented in California, achieved great prominence in large part because of contributions made by Californians – Angelenos in particular. The scientific theory of eugenics, though it had existed since the late nineteenth century, was gaining momentum in Los Angeles during the early 1920s. Darwin's cousin Francis Galton had coined the word "eugenics" in 1883, and, as a logical

outgrowth of one understanding of Darwinism, it had been prominent in Los Angeles intellectual circles since the turn of the century. Again, it is important to recognize that support for eugenics was not confined to those expressing reactionary or conservative philosophies. It aligned comfortably with progressivism, as William Deverell, Tom Sitton, and other California historians have noted, and one of the region's most influential advocates was also one of its most important socialist reformers (and real estate developers), Dr. John Randolph Haynes.¹⁸⁸

Medical historian Alexandra Minna Stern mentions Haynes' belief in sterilization, colonies for the "feeble-minded," and support for public ownership of water and electricity as "interrelated social endeavors best guided by the laws of physiology and biology."¹⁸⁹ Haynes was also the principal advocate of the ballot initiative, referendum, and recall in California politics, having formed the California Direct Legislation League in 1895, and remaining active in the fight for a new Los Angeles Charter and statewide initiative and referendum legislation until it was finally ratified by California voters in October of 1911. He fought against the anti-union, conservative editorial bias of the *Los Angeles Times*, but, agreed with the *Times*' publisher Harry Chandler on issues of race betterment and eugenics.

"California," according to Stern, "stood at the vanguard of the national eugenics movement."¹⁹⁰ She concludes that by 1910, in fact, many of California's scientists, reformers, and professionals were actively engaged in eugenics projects, and these men and women were not just everyday citizens; such California notables as Haynes, Luther Burbank, Joseph Widney, and Paul Popenoe enjoyed national reputations and influence.¹⁹¹ Ironically enough, Haynes had

¹⁸⁸ See Tom Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1992).

¹⁸⁹ Alexandra Minna Stern, 85.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 84.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, 85. See also Paul Popenoe and Rosewell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918). Popenoe was the editor of the national *Journal of Heredity* and coauthor of the standard eugenics college textbook, published in 1918. In it he asserts that the "color line" is a social adaptation with survival value.

relocated from the East to Los Angeles in the 1880s because health problems – his bronchitis – required California’s more arid climate. But that did not deter him from suggesting that others who suffered from poor health should be sterilized to protect the race. Perhaps if the magic city could not cure the feeble, they ought not procreate.

Californian humanity, like the citrus and other agricultural miracles that flourished in the state, was meant to nurture only the strongest stock that heredity could produce. If, as Los Angeles’ Bellamy Clubs and John Randolph Haynes advocated, the municipality was obligated to secure the public ownership of natural resources like water works, not all members of the human race were equally qualified to be part of this public. Since the 1880s, booster myths and medical science had reflected such restrictions in their descriptions of landscape, place, and inhabitants. The science of racism, legitimized by eugenics research, was, by the 1920s, firmly entrenched in California culture. In the next chapter we will look at the way such racial ideas influenced the boundaries and composition of Los Angeles spaces, and the way law, custom, and mythology inscribed limitations that would last generations before they would start to erode, let alone disappear.

CHAPTER 2: PERMITTING AND LICENSING

“We need population—not of races inferior in natural traits, pagan in religion, ignorant of free institutions, and incapable of sharing in them without putting the very existence of those institutions in peril—but we need immigrants of kindred races, who will constitute a congenial element and locate themselves and their families permanently upon the soil; who can be admitted to an equal share in our political privileges.”¹ Race was socially constructed, as Ruiz de Burton’s imaginary past demonstrated, and this construction was reinforced by a juridical mechanism designed to determine racial boundaries. In California, as elsewhere, law served to institutionalize perceptions of identity and residential patterns that might otherwise have remained fluid. Racially focused laws and origin myths would, in fact, mutually construct the ideal of a white city, in spite of the reality that the region’s residents were racially and ethnically diverse.

In 1870 The California Immigrant Union introduced a bill to the State Assembly that proposed establishing a State Board of Immigration, not to set immigration quotas as would be the goal of future immigration measures, but to recruit immigrants to the State. “Give us a man in each country,” the Immigrant Union proposed, “and give us a Government Real Estate Agency that can tell us where Government lands are.”² But “each country” was carefully delineated: the Immigrant union recognized England, Germany, Denmark, Holland, France, and Italy as its targets, noting that France and Italy should only be sent pamphlets emphasizing the

¹A.D. Bell, *Arguments in Favor of Immigration with an explanation of the Measures Recommended by the Immigrant Union*; read by A.D. Bell before the honorable members of the Committee on Immigration of the House of Assembly, Legislature of California, February 1, 1870 (California Immigrant Union, 1870), 5.

² *ibid.*, 14.

opportunities for silk and wine industries in the state.³ Appropriate immigration to California coupled “race” with occupation in an attempt to engineer the specific set of skilled laborers who would become Californians.

Supporters of the bill advocated the same careful engineering for immigrants who came from the Eastern United States, where they were also proposing that California should establish state liaison offices. Throughout the nation, racial science and law were aligning to revise concepts of identity; the notorious “one-drop rule” exemplifies this, and the intricate, convoluted, and opportunistically inconsistent classifications of Asians and Indians show the extent to which this system was planning to legally determine race. But in California, it was the less successful attempt to racially classify people of Mexican ancestry that proved to be the most visible aspect of an imagined homogeneous utopia. Peggy Pascoe, in her groundbreaking 2010 work, *What Comes Naturally*, shows that in many legal formulations Mexican Americans were considered to be white. She notes, for example, that they were never subjected to marriage prohibitions under any state’s miscegenation laws.⁴ This, I would argue, could have been more a legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (which required equal treatment under the law for Mexicans electing to remain in the United States) than it was an Anglo acknowledgment of whiteness. Pascoe, in fact, considers this to be a factor as well.

Yet the idea that Anglos repeatedly attempted to reclassify people they called Mexicans as non-white can be demonstrated throughout a range of academic studies and government reports at least through the 1930s. Indeed, the October 1930 report from Governor C. G. Young’s Mexican Fact-Finding Committee, entitled *Mexicans in California*, is nearly obsessed with attempting to categorize the racial composition of Mexican citizens and Mexican immigrants to

³ A.D. Bell, *Arguments*, 18.

⁴ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121.

California. “It seems desirable,” the report told California’s governor, “to inquire as to the racial composition of the Mexican people.”⁵ The report began by decomposing the races constituting the nation of Mexico: of a “total population of 14,334,780, only 1,404,718, or 9.8 per cent, were classified as whites; *Mestizos* were 59.3 percent of the total; and Indians were 29.2 per cent of the total.”⁶ The researchers attempted this in various forms several times, stratifying racial groups in Mexico and California, before revealing that “It is generally conceded that the bulk of the immigration from Mexico into the United States is from the pure Indian or the *Mestizo* stock of the Mexican population.”⁷

Many studies, moreover, had concluded the same thing, and in spite of Anglo and upper class Mexicans’ attempts at whitewashing the territory’s past, the legacy of Indian and mixed-race ancestry often was revealed (probably inadvertently) in cultural depictions of early California. Nevertheless, just four pages later in the report, when the authors explain the function of quotas in the United States Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924, Mexicans are classified as “6.5 percent of the foreign-born whites in California.”⁸ With respect to immigration quotas (under which Mexicans and most other Latin Americans were exempted), Mexicans could be white (in fact, perhaps needed to be white),⁹ but in terms of “science” they appeared to be primarily Indian or mixed race. In an era of scientific racism, this inability to determine race could work to the benefit or detriment of any given individual of Hispanic origin. It accounts, in part, for the unstable identity and inconsistent experiences of people with Mexican ancestry in Los Angeles.

⁵ *Governor C.C. Young’s Fact-Finding Committee*, “Mexicans in California” (San Francisco, October 1930), 42.

⁶ *ibid.*, 43.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*, 47.

⁹ I would argue that this was because non-quota immigration, regardless of what popular opinion may have preferred, was necessary to establish a large enough, and inexpensive enough, labor pool to expand and develop the commercial and agricultural productions of Los Angeles.

Historian George Sanchez sees this condition as a conflict between “Anglo-American politicians, academics, reporters, and others who believed in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority” and “reformers [who] considered the Mexican immigrant as similar to the European in adaptability.”¹⁰ It may be, however, that thoughts about race were not this clearly delineated; academics, in fact, never agreed to the racial definition of Mexican Americans, and reformers were not so overwhelmingly supportive of Mexican integration. While early Angeleno neighborhoods (Boyle Heights is a good example) were relatively interracial, and utopian communities had not always seemed to systematically exclude applicants with Hispanic surnames,¹¹ as the area of Los Angeles urbanized, relocated commercial agricultural to the city’s edges, and added zoning laws to isolate industries with heavy manual labor requirements, the separation and sometimes ruralization of predominantly Mexican-American neighborhoods began to take hold.

Ethnic isolation may have been the bridesmaid of the global process of urbanization, but the form it took in Los Angeles deviated from most other territories. Booster discourse, which insisted Los Angeles was both city and country, shaped a space where what Raymond Williams calls a “knowable community” became impossible to achieve.¹² Paradoxically, boosters had envisioned this rural-urban combination as an idea to overcome the confusion of the city. “The increasing division and complexity of labour; the altered critical relations between and within social classes,” as Williams put it, was one of the reasons boosters imagined a hybrid urban-rural space.¹³ Laborers, or so the narrative goes, would be more attracted to a city that retained positive aspects of the rural environments that were more legible to them – that were more like

¹⁰George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 95.

¹¹ It be sure, we have no way of knowing if selection considered skin color or ethnicity.

¹² Raymond Williams, *The Country and The City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 165.

¹³ *ibid.*

the countryside from which they emigrated. Such sensibilities were conveyed brilliantly in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which accounted for its success as a "city novel" throughout the nation, but especially in Los Angeles.

"The so-called fabric of the city," writes urban studies scholar Dana Cuff, "is made up of its residential neighborhoods."¹⁴ Cuff, along with many other historians of Los Angeles, situates the formation of the area's neighborhoods, and particularly its suburban structures, in the 1940s,¹⁵ when the "utopian underpinnings" of federal housing programs "help to construct a social history of the city."¹⁶ Public-private housing connections and suburban development was transformative in the 1940s, but there was a continuous negotiation between public-private and rural-suburban that had peaked once before, in the interwar period, and can trace its origins to the late nineteenth century. In a sense, the Southland character was constructed from another dimension of cooperation; it was the discursive cooperation between rural and urban place-descriptions that gave the state its color. The fabric of Los Angeles was embossed with racial, ethnic, and class diversity that community builders needed to manage in order to realize the type of utopia that people admired in popular literature. One of the tools they would develop to manage this complex heterogeneous population was residential zoning; novel legal statutes that would set the conditions for material and human integration and separation in the early twentieth century.¹⁷

¹⁴ Dana Cuff, *The Provisional City: Los Angeles Stories of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 45.

¹⁵ In identifying zoning as one basis of neighborhood identification, I am contesting a popular perception, articulated clearly by architect Charles Moore, that "unlike most cities, Los Angeles is not organized as a set of places or neighborhoods. It is so big that it must be seen, for the most part, as a set of very long streets or freeways or rides, and the places of interest as events along the way." See Charles Moore, Peter Becker, Regula Campbell, *The City Observed: Los Angeles, A Guide To Its Landscapes* (New York: Random House, 1984), xiii.

¹⁶ Cuff, 45.

¹⁷ For a discussion of how incarceration (in a sense the most extreme form of zoning) was used as a tool to manage poor white populations in Los Angeles see Kelly Lytle Hernandez, "Hobos in Heaven: Race, Incarceration, and the Rise of Los Angeles, 1880-1910," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (August, 2014): 410-447.

“Zoning,” according to former president of the American Planners Association, Richard F. Babcock, “has provided the device for protecting the homogeneous, single-family suburb from the city.”¹⁸ In fact, Babcock asserts that “the insulation of the single-family detached dwelling was the primary objective of the early zoning ordinances.”¹⁹ Babcock, a lawyer, planner, and liberal politician from the 1950s until his death in 1993, was intimately involved in what he termed as “the zoning game,” and was one of the first legal scholars to observe that zoning was essentially a “rational and comprehensive extension of the public nuisance law.”²⁰ Citing a 1926 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company*, Babcock demonstrates that the incursion of an apartment building into a single-family residential area was conceived by the court to be a type of nuisance, even though it could be perfectly desirable in another area. It is my contention that both building type – apartment or single family unit – and zone type – commercial, residential, or industrial – could function as proxies for racial, ethnic, class, and marital-status groups; what was being zoned were not merely buildings, but people. “Space,” according to Henri Lefebvre, “is not a scientific object removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic.”²¹ Nowhere was the spatial analytics of capitalism more evident than in the development of Los Angeles, and in particular, in the city’s means of space-management – its early zoning statutes.

In fact, these hidden dimensions of zoning belie the notion, still often cited by historians today, that the period between 1850 and 1920 was a “golden age” for African Americans in California. Scholars often note that in Los Angeles the racial hierarchy continually changed

¹⁸ Richard F. Babcock, *The Zoning Game: Municipal Practices and Policies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 3.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*, 4.

²¹ Henri Lefebvre, “Reflections on the Politics of Space,” 1970, *State, Space, World*, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 170.

during the period: a powerful example of how rapidly racism can be repackaged, re-energized, and relegitimized.”²² Yet, this does not mean, as is sometimes asserted, that prejudice against Mexicans, Chinese, and Japanese exempted African Americans from the type of discrimination they faced elsewhere in the nation. While the classification of non-white was mutable, and there were opportunistic differences with respect to the severity that specific forms of prejudice took (as was the case even in the U.S. South, where the black/white binary predominated), the city was imagined to be an Anglo-Saxon invention, and those who did not fit this categorization, whether legally or merely by popular custom, were at least discursively segregated out of white Los Angeles, and in practice eventually isolated geographically.²³

It is true that by the fin de siècle a higher percentage of African Americans (thirty-six percent) was able to own homes in Los Angeles than anywhere else in the United States, but even as early as the 1880s the territory already considered its home ownership idea essentially to be an expression of whiteness.²⁴ In fact, whiteness in Los Angeles was so intertwined with home ownership that poor whites who rented rooms or were itinerant were discursively classified as others – members of an “outcast world” or even “parasites.”²⁵ Harrison Gray Otis, owner of the influential *Los Angeles Times*, often wrote editorials warning Angelenos that their paradise was in jeopardy of being overrun by tramps who may have been characterized by their lack of employment, but were isolated from Los Angeles society by their lack of home ownership.²⁶

²² Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879 – 1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 11.

²³ In spite of the top-line observation that African Americans resided in most Los Angeles neighborhoods, a closer look reveals that more than seventy percent of the population lived in fewer than ten areas delineated by distinct borderlines.

²⁴ Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 42.

²⁵ Josiah Flynt, *Tramping With Tramps* (New York: The Century Company, 1907), ix, 3, 90, quoted in Hernandez, “Hobos in Heaven,” 428.

²⁶ Flynt, *Tramping With Tramps*, 90.

In spite of the very public articulation of whiteness and class as preconditions of Angeleno acceptance, there are myriad accounts by African-American Angelenos (most of whom migrated from the South) insisting that Los Angeles was “heaven” and absent the racial discrimination to which they had become accustomed in other places.²⁷ There is little doubt that L.A. during this period was better for African Americans than the South.²⁸ But even so, through the enforcement of racial covenants in many of the developing areas of Los Angeles, and the zoning statutes that tended to concentrate industrial facilities near the central city while prohibiting them from predominantly white neighborhoods, geographic pockets near the city’s most urban spaces became de facto African-American neighborhoods; and they suffered the ills of crowded urban centers everywhere – poverty, congestion, and disease.²⁹

The central city was considered by progressive reformers to be, as historian Mark Wild noted, “an incubator for a mongrelized, illegitimate culture,” and Angelenos worried that this culture would move into other – whiter – neighborhoods. At least since the 1880s, Anglo-Angelenos had been attempting to circumscribe the free movement of people of color, and such movement as did occur was usually met with resistance. Sophisticated zoning ordinances would function to reduce the possibility that such diversity would expand geographically, and as the city’s early history of racial interaction faded, concepts of Anglo superiority prevailed.

²⁷ F. H. Crumbly, “A Los Angeles Citizen,” *The Colored American Magazine*, Vols. 8-9, Mar. 1905, reprint (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 482.

²⁸ See Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), especially chapters one and two. See also Lonnie Bunch, “A Past Not Necessarily Prologue: The Afro-American in Los Angeles,” in *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*, ed. by Norman Klein and Martin J. Schiesl (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1990), 101-129.

²⁹ Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 145.

As individual Los Angeles developers strove to reinvent the metropolis in the late nineteenth century, they produced a new discursive terrain. In this discourse, non-Anglos and poor Anglos were conceived to be symbolic public nuisances – legitimate targets for zoning out of new productive regions and into less desirable areas. Homogenous racial conclaves came together at what one planning scholar calls “nodal points, or temporary fixations around which identities and politics are sutured in dialogic contestation of identities.”³⁰ Such nodes were, in fact, necessary for community builders to construct the material forms of “better” places imagined in contemporary literature. If it was easy to erase people of color from the plot of a novel, it was a more complex project to erase them from a plot of land.

Literature, of course, was not the only source of information encouraging segregated residential zones. Such segregation was well aligned with the way social order had been conceived since Reconstruction, but utopian literature, in particular, reinforced the idea that the path to a better society did not include racial integration or multicultural expression. Harmony meant homogeneity, and when this message was targeted to white audiences, harmony meant whiteness.

Millionaire real-estate man, reformer, and single-taxer Abbot Kinney, future developer of the seaside amusement Venice of America, may have preferred that the public places he built and owned did not facilitate the mixing of races, at least if his thoughts in 1904 comported with the book he published in 1893, *The Conquest of Death*. In that work he asserted that “the negro shows his deficiency in being unable to cope with the white man.”³¹ This, Kinney believed, was due to evolutionary inferiority – and he insisted that if an Anglo-Saxon bred with an African

³⁰ Jean Hillier, “Imagined Value: The Poetics and Politics of Place,” in *The Governance of Place: Space and Planning Processes*, ed. by Ali Madanipour, Angela Hull and Patsy Healey (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 72.

³¹ Abbot Kinney, *The Conquest of Death* (New York: n.p., 1893), 46.

American, “the lower race traits will appear more or less modified in his children's forms, hair, constitutions, and complexions.” Moreover, “It is probable,” Kinney went on to say, “that the brain will partake of the lower qualities also.”³² Kinney often explained such ideas in his popular weekly magazine, which promoted the politics of citriculture, individualistic government, and racism, *The Saturday Post*. But the same year that Kinney published *The Conquest of Death*, the State of California passed a groundbreaking statute prohibiting racial discrimination at public amusements and accommodations; a statute that was upheld by the California Supreme Court in October of 1905 – the year after Venice of America opened.³³

The landmark case, *Greenberg v. Western Turf Association*, codified the state’s 1893 and 1897 anti-discrimination statutes and was interpreted to have upheld earlier federal civil rights legislation that had called for the “full equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters and other places of public amusement.”³⁴ Notably, as would be the case for many years with decisions about housing covenants, while the case did uphold anti-discrimination statutes, it did not do so on the basis of the fourteenth amendment (which was often the plaintiff’s argument). Contract law would still prevail, but the state was deemed to have the authority to prohibit discrimination in businesses that by law it was allowed to regulate with respect to non-racial issues.

Kinney would be instrumental in creating the public amusement called Venice of America on the Ocean Park side of the Santa Monica Bay, and, as Luther Ingersoll declared in his 1908 *Century History of the Santa Monica Bay Cities*, Kinney made the “Dream City” of

³² Kinney, *Conquest*, 46.

³³ California Statute 1893, ch. 185, at 220; upheld in *Greenberg v. Western Turf Association*, Supreme Court, California, October 1905, recorded in John M. Gardner, ed., *American Negligence Reports – Current Series*, Vol. XIX (Chicago: Callaghan & Company, 1912), 72.

³⁴ Marshall Kaplan, *Discrimination in California Housing: The Need for Additional Legislation*, 50 Cal. L. Rev. 635 (1962), 636. Available at: <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/californialawreview/vol50/iss4/4>.

Ocean Park “the center of attraction for the entire state.”³⁵ Still, like Venice’s resort counterparts up and down the coast, in this beach town California dreamers dreamt of a sandy white shoreline. But with an ambivalent set of legal principles demanding equal treatment and access to public amusements and beaches, Californians could only achieve the level of racial segregation they desired by transforming public beachfront into private membership clubs.

Paradoxically, since the 1890s, Los Angeles statutes (and public trust doctrine) had been protecting the public’s access to beaches, so segregation had to be managed carefully. The conflict was characterized clearly further up the coast – by San Francisco real estate developer Adolph Sutro, who restricted African Americans from bathing in – though not from attending – the coastal resort baths that he owned. Sutro explained that such exclusion was purely a business matter. “It would ruin our baths here,” Sutro declared, “because the white people would refuse to use them if the negroes were allowed equal privileges in that way.”³⁶

Los Angeles-area beach amusements, such as the baths and plunges built by Kinney at Venice, also attempted to eliminate any opportunity for racial comingling, but this was difficult due to the state’s longstanding anti-discrimination statutes. Most Southland amusements were not as overt about segregation as Sutro had been, but still, oral histories of African Americans who lived in Los Angeles during this period also recall bath house segregation; non-whites were only allowed to bathe on specific days of the week.³⁷

African Americans had, in fact, frequented an area near Venice since at least 1904 – a part of the coastline that white residents pejoratively named “the Inkwell,” and by 1922 black investors had purchased beach frontage near Pico in Santa Monica and planned to develop “a

³⁵ Luther Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History of the Santa Monica Bay Cities* (Los Angeles: Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), 229.

³⁶ “Negroes Claim Civil Rights – They Insist Upon Equal Privileges in Public Baths,” *San Francisco Call*, Volume 82, Number 63, (August 2, 1897).

³⁷ Lonnie Bunch, “The Past Not Necessarily Prologue,” 114.

bath-house and amusement center for negroes.”³⁸ The plan was opposed and finally thwarted when the ad hoc Santa Monica Bay Protective League was formed by property owners in Santa Monica and Ocean Park. The League was, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, “instrumental in getting an ordinance passed by the commissioners of the city of Santa Monica denying permission for the construction of the negro bathhouse and amusement center.” Moreover, “the sale of the property,” the reporter noted, “was also canceled.”³⁹ It is telling that the proposed Pico site was quite near to the Venice of America amusement area, which apparently did not suffer from any such restrictive ordinance, and, indeed, zoning ordinances at the Pico site would be changed when Anglo developers proposed an investment in commercialized leisure there.⁴⁰

Perhaps bolstered by their Jim Crow success, the Santa Monica Bay Protective League went even further and managed to secure the closure of an existing African American business in the area, a dance club called Caldwell’s Hall. “The dance hall,” according to affidavits from white residents, “was conducted in a disorderly manner,” and “constituted a public nuisance.”⁴¹ The idea African American businesses – in fact African Americans themselves – could be segregated by invoking laws intended to avoid public nuisance was becoming common in Los Angeles place-formation, and other examples of this construction became apparent as the greater Los Angeles area grew in complexity. The Protective League, in fact, which announced its recruiting goal to establish “a membership of 1,000 Caucasians,” promoted the idea that people of color could exist in Los Angeles, but only in a separate and unseen world, (echoing preacher and novelist Sutton Griggs’ utopian work, *Imperium in Imperia*)⁴² contending that “they [African

³⁸ Local Correspondent, “Amusement Center for Negro Visitors,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1922.

³⁹ “Settlement of Negroes Is Opposed,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1922, 7.

⁴⁰ Alison Rose Jefferson, “African American Leisure Space in Santa Monica: The Beach Sometimes Known As the ‘Inkwell,’ 1900s-1960s,” *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Summer 2009): 155-189.

⁴¹ “Settlement of Negroes Is Opposed,” 7.

⁴² See Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperia* 1899 (Middlesex, UK: Echo Library, 2006). The novel is about a fully functional African American government and society and operates secretly within white America.

Americans] should procure a beach of their own at a point separate and apart from all white beaches – which would eliminate the possibility of friction for all time to come.”⁴³ As was often the case, the white public rationale for beachfront exclusivity was that integration would deteriorate property values, but this was merely the shallow explanation. A deeper dive – a plunge – would reveal an intricate social imaginary that demanded racial homogeneity.

Just fifty-three miles south of Los Angeles, Laguna and Arch Beaches were portrayed by boosters as spaces that were beyond the everyday conflicts that one would expect in cities – even city beaches. “Here you can rest in Nature's parking grounds,” boosters declared, “for no man has as yet despoiled its natural beauty. You are beyond the clamoring crowd seeking ‘hot dogs’ and various other concessionaires at the Northern artificial beaches.”⁴⁴ Such isolation had its social benefits, according to boosters, for lack of mass amusements meant that this beach area “draws none of the undesirable element.”⁴⁵ Who exactly that undesirable element might be went without saying, but it was not the “business man, jaded housewife, artisan, or tired actor” at whom this marketing campaign for summer homes was targeted.

A conception of the beach as sanctuary would have been very much in concert with Edward Bellamy’s construction of a seaside community. For Angelenos and more indirectly for Bellamy, the beach was, in fact, an Anglo sanctuary. In *Equality*, the sequel to *Looking Backward* published less than a year before his death, Bellamy’s protagonist Julian West recalls “a little strip of beach” that had been a favorite place. “Here in that life so long ago, and yet recalled as if of yesterday,” West tells us, “I had been used from a lad to go do my

⁴³ Times staff correspondent, “Caucasians Organize Protective League,” *Los Angeles Times*, (June 9, 1922), 14.

⁴⁴ Pamphlet, *A Rambling Sketch In and About Laguna and Arch Beaches, California* (Los Angeles: D.A. Hufford Publisher, 1922), 24.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 35.

daydreaming.”⁴⁶ This was the place, then, where a young West practiced imagining the future – a socialist world without conflict, without the social problems of the city – without race.

In 1930 the problems of the city required more complicated solutions. In the midst of solving the social problems inherent in a heterogeneous, multi-ethnic area, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission produced a history of “zoning” in Los Angeles and introduced a kind of double-founding myth that would become a standard motif for city leaders who could no longer completely whitewash Los Angeles’ Mexican past, but who needed to rationalize the superiority of Anglo heritage.⁴⁷ Los Angeles, they asserted, had not always been a modern city, and “Pueblo planning got its start in March of 1836, when a commission was appointed to prepare a plan to eliminate the extreme irregularity of the streets – a problem caused by the absence of previous planning.”⁴⁸ But this did not lead to a modern city – one which rationally regulated growth or the use of public and private property.

Rather, “zoning – the regulation of the use of property by public authority . . . was first attempted in Los Angeles in 1904 when a residential district was created prohibiting certain industrial activities therein.”⁴⁹ Zoning, in effect, was the pueblo’s second founding. It was what created modern Los Angeles, which by public authority could segregate business and behavior, and by inference, the people who engaged in business and behavior.

Between 1904 and 1908 a series of new ordinances divided nearly the entire city into industrial and residential districts, with industries in which non-whites participated in higher

⁴⁶ Edward Bellamy, *Equality* (Toronto: George Morang, 1897), 65.

⁴⁷ Ironically, the *Ramona* craze, which began in 1923, brought faux adobe and Spanish colonial architecture into the built-environment and created an interest in a romanticized Mexican past that made it difficult to ignore California’s Spanish and Mexican history.

⁴⁸ Everett B. Mansur, “History of the Major Traffic Street Plan of Los Angeles,” *Annual Report*, Los Angeles City Planning Commission, 1930, in *City Planning in Los Angeles – A History* (Los Angeles: Department of City Planning Administration Services Division, March 1964), 66.

⁴⁹ Huber Earl Smutz, “Zoning in Los Angeles,” *Annual Report* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles City Planning Commission, 1930), 58.

proportion distanced from white residential districts, and minority residential areas zoned for mixed use.⁵⁰ Geographer Michael Dear situates the zoning ordinances Los Angeles piloted first in the city and then through the nation's first regional planning organization, the County Regional Planning Commission (1923), within the context of "land use planning," noting that planners conceived of economic needs preempting social and aesthetic ones.⁵¹ I argue that economics, social, and aesthetic systems are mutually constituted and that racial segregation is inherent in all conceptions of real estate use. This, of course, does not mean that all efforts to homogenize and segregate social spaces are utopian – quite the contrary. Free-market capitalism and planned societies may all depend on segregating space across many different dimensions (e.g. race, religion, class, marital-status, age, occupation). What is notable in the period's utopian thought, planning, and material experimentation, however, is that it sought no solution to social order other than homogeneity. If one were visiting a Southern California utopian colony in 1911 that was not explicitly founded by people of color, one could expect to find only Anglo colonists. This was not always the case in American utopias, but by the late nineteenth century, one could count on it.⁵²

Since the 1870s, Southern California real estate and life, like many places in America, were both marked by rigid boundaries that considered aspects of race, creed, and color. This was especially notable in home places. In fact, Dana Cuff contends that "through housing, we can see

⁵⁰ Emily Talen, "Zoning and Diversity in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Planning History*, Vol II, No. 4 (Nov. 2012), 331.

⁵¹ Michael Dear, "In the City, Time Becomes Visible: Intentionality and Urbanism in Los Angeles, 1781-1991," *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 91.

⁵² See Wendy E. Chmielewski, "Sojourner Truth: Utopian Vision and Search for Community, 1797-1883," in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, ed. by Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern, and Marilyn Klee-Hartzell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 21-37. Chmielewski discusses Sojourner Truth's search for communities that would provide greater opportunities for African American women, such as Harmonia and Northampton. While there is no certain evidence that she actually joined either of these communities (though she lived in and had friends in each one), Truth's experiences do demonstrate that there was a degree of interaction between African American and Anglo utopians that extended well beyond the social relations that would have been typical in Southern California utopias in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

the determining spatial role that racial discrimination played in American urbanism.”⁵³ Nowhere was this more overt than in the developing territory of Los Angeles, where it continued at least until the 1970s, in spite of the fact that in 1917 the Supreme Court’s *Buchanan v. Warley* decision struck down racial zoning ordinances.”⁵⁴ Demonstrating that the demographic facets of zoning were essential components of developing a better city, Angeleno developers circumvented this ruling when private development companies took over the responsibility for exclusionary zoning from state, county, and municipal government.

Moreover, only one year before *Buchanan v. Warley*, prominent Los Angeles attorney and counsel to the Title Insurance Company, Melville Fraser, was advising attorneys that “there are no public rights concerned in the transaction [the sale of property]. I can do with my property as I see fit, sell it to whom I choose, and no man can compel me to sell; therefore, if I refuse to sell to a negro, that individual has no right of action against me.”⁵⁵ Such legal principles would eventually be struck down entirely, but African Americans, Asians, Mexican Americans, and sometimes Jewish Angelenos would live and purchase homes under ambiguous circumstances for several decades longer.

Until that time, racial restrictions in deeds were not exceptional – they were routine. In 1906, for example, the author of a popular southland book, *Real Estate Business Self-Taught*, illustrated the uniformity and universality of racial covenants when he included examples of standard sales contracts, deeds, rental, and lease agreement forms, most of which included clauses describing restrictions. Form number 167, “Another Form of Declaration of Trust for Placing Subdivision on Market,” included the covenant, “Trustee shall not sell said property or

⁵³ Cuff, 47.

⁵⁴ Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 26.

⁵⁵ Melville Fraser, *Realty Laws of California: Talks by Melville Fraser, Member of the Bar, Counsel of Title Insurance Company* (Los Angeles: Samuel M. Cord, 1916), 47.

any portion or parcel thereof to any person or persons of other than the White or Caucasian race.”⁵⁶ Similar types of clauses were included in individual deeds, but this particular example demonstrates the pre-1917 attempt to establish blanket restrictions for an entire development.

As late as 1928, eleven years after *Buchanan v. Warley* was initially decided, the Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, which counted the renowned economist Richard Ely among its monograph series editors, published a one-hundred page study entitled *The Use of Deed Restrictions in Subdivision Development*. This research affirmed the court decision in *Warley*, claiming that the state had overreached in its attempt to enforce the restriction against property sales to African Americans, but concluded that limitations to “the right to discriminate through private contract,” just as Fraser had asserted twelve years earlier, “is not so clearly defined.”⁵⁷ The case law these researchers reviewed appeared to limit constitutional protection for African Americans as claimed in the fourteenth amendment only to actions of the state, and continued to hold sacred the rights of individual property owners to set conditions in contracts for the sale of specific properties, bearing in mind that such restrictions could not “run with the land,” but applied only to a single contract. While this did not invalidate racial restrictions, it did eliminate the practice of attempting to set them in perpetuity; contractual restrictions had to be limited in time.

In fact, individual (or Homeowner-Association-enforced) racial covenants, which often excluded African Americans, Asians, Jews, and other minorities that the community might consider to be “non-Caucasian” were not outlawed by the Supreme Court until 1948.⁵⁸ After this, supposedly non-racial zoning ordinances and later community “lifestyle” regulations still served

⁵⁶ W.A. Carney, *Real Estate Business Self-Taught* (Los Angeles: W.A. Carney, 1906), 154.

⁵⁷ Helen C. Monchow, *The Use of Deed Restrictions in Subdivision Development* (Chicago: The Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, 1928), 48.

⁵⁸ McKenzie, *Privatopia*, 58.

the purpose of housing segregation, which in Los Angeles enabled the creation of predominantly white suburbs. The concept that communities must be homogeneous is located not in actual multi-racial experience in Los Angeles, where mixed neighborhoods were not uncommon in the city's early history, but in nineteenth-century race science and literary conceptualizations of utopia. The sources of influence are especially evident in the types of utopias popularized by Edward Bellamy and the novels that copied his *Looking Backward* formulations.⁵⁹

It was only natural that real estate in Los Angeles would play a role in creating utopia. Early Los Angeles had fostered a special relationship among real estate, perceived quality of life, and individual identity. Between 1886 and 1888, formative years for Los Angeles, opportunities to find a home, or even build a life through real estate, were plentiful, exciting, and hopeful, but also shady and risky. Fortunes could be earned, but poverty could overtake "greenhorn" risk takers, as well. As one of the period's journalists wrote about these years, "the boom boomed with its greatest fury. It overshadowed everything else. Legitimate business was 'nowhere' compared with speculation in city and suburban lots."⁶⁰ When the bottom dropped out of real estate speculation in 1888, not only were fortunes lost and the myriad of brokers, agents, and developers unemployed, but general population growth in the area slowed and, for a time, even declined.⁶¹ The 1880's were, in a sense, a false start for Los Angeles, but the 1890s proved to be

⁵⁹ Some utopian novels, like Solomon Schindler's *Young West*, were direct responses to Bellamy's work and actually appropriated his characters in order to continue to explain socialism or, conversely, to refute it. Others, like William Morris' *News from Nowhere*, were literary responses, and still others, including William Dean Howells' *A Traveler from Altruria* (and, arguably, Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland*) were independent literary works attempting to take advantage of the utopian genre's popularity. See Glenn Negley, *Utopian Literature, A Bibliography* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977).

⁶⁰ Ralph Hoyt, "Story of the Los Angeles Boom," *The California Homeseeker*, vol. 2, no. 2 (The Homeseeker Publishing Company, 1902), 129, MS-01, Box 65, Folder 19, Don Meadows Papers, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁶¹ Charles D. Willard, *A History of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, California, 1888-1900* (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner, 1899) 12; also cited in Norman Klein, "The Sunshine Strategy: Buying and Selling the Fantasy of Los Angeles," in *20th Century Los Angeles*, 33.

a distinct period of re-establishing legitimacy and urban maturity, albeit on the city's own rather unique terms.

Los Angeles boosters often claimed that their city was unique, not only in its development or its outcomes, but in its very origins. The booster story of its harbor, which one promoter called “a commercial romance,” is a typical example of mythological, racialized place making.⁶² “Unlike other large cities of the United States, which grew up as the trading center for some agricultural, lumbering, mining, river or sea port area,” according to one booster, “Los Angeles was founded on purpose.”⁶³ What is most masterful in this booster account is not merely the contention that Los Angeles had a purpose, but that the purpose was nearly divine. This was a bold claim, and one which the author would trace much further back than to the Spanish missionaries of the eighteenth century. This booster established a lineal descent of biblical origin; from none other than the Chaldean patriarch Abraham.

This myth of Los Angeles origin begins “when Abraham took Horace Greeley’s justly celebrated advice some four thousand years before Horace gave it, and moved out West from Ur of the Chaldees to grow up with the country in the Land of Canaan.”⁶⁴ Booster literature often intentionally exaggerated territorial claims, but this author’s literary invention was not entirely tongue-in-cheek. In fact, he insisted that “Abraham’s move can be traced down through the ages directly to the building of Los Angeles Harbor as one of its results, which is the why of this simple tale.” Anticipating some pushback at the sheer brazenness of his claim, he explained that “some individuals think it is a far cry—or even more so—from Abraham through four thousand years to Los Angeles, but it isn’t. For out of the migration of the peoples around the eastern end

⁶² Albert M. Hill, *Clarence H. Matson Building a World Gateway: The Story of Los Angeles Harbor* (Los Angeles: Pacific Era Publishers, 1945) 15.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 17.

of the Mediterranean a hundred generations ago, developed the westward march of empire and civilization which is now reaching its climax on the western shores of the Pacific, with Los Angeles as its apex.”⁶⁵ This was perhaps the most remarkable city-origin myth since the story of Romulus and Remus, but however fanciful we now think it is, there were parts of this invention that resonated in the consciousness of Anglo-Angelenos and contoured the exclusiveness of the area’s neighborhoods and public spaces.

The “march of empire and civilization” to which the booster alludes is, as he characterizes it, “the age-old urge [that] pushed the Anglo-Saxon westward over the Rockies and on to the shores of the Pacific.”⁶⁶ Los Angeles, in this formulation, is the place that will signal the culmination of progress for the white race. It is here, he contends, “on the shores of the Pacific [that] the Anglo-Saxon race will climax. Here it will come in ever-increasing numbers—and the peak of this westward movement of the ages is Los Angeles.”⁶⁷ Were this promotion written during the era of nineteenth-century immigration, (when, in fact, novelist Frank Norris did author a very similar myth) or even during the rapid growth of the 1920s, it would, perhaps, not have been as surprising as its origin in the post-World War II period.

In this attempt to demonstrate the direct lineage of Los Angeles as “the city upon a hill” of western civilization, the author constructed a family tree of racialized place-making that seems to have persisted and flowered in Los Angeles since the very beginning of settlement. The notion of the West as civilization’s apex (which is still reflected in many popular historical accounts today) intrinsically plants the seeds of progress and utopia in the very existence of the nation’s westernmost territory; the Pacific Coast and its nascent cities. It is a mythology fed by

⁶⁵ Hill, 17.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

the Turner Thesis of 1893, reinforced by Darwin and Spencer, and implausibly surviving the racial holocausts of the Second World War.⁶⁸

The modern booster himself vested the inevitability of Los Angeles' primacy in "the character of the men who came to Southern California soon after the War Between the States and later." "They were progressive men of vision and courage," he contends, "unafraid to grapple with big problems and projects."⁶⁹ In reality white immigrants were mostly laborers or farmers from the Midwest and, increasingly, the South; probably not as progressive as boosters pretended, and maybe not even as courageous as we would think, since most believed the booster myth that success and fortune were inevitable in this western paradise. This same harbor-booster contrasts the new immigrant Anglos to the original Spanish founders (1781) of Los Angeles, whom he characterizes as "the scum of Sonora, the only ones who could be hired or persuaded to come to the desolate site of the pueblo. They were a mixture of Indians, Mulattos, and *mestizos*."⁷⁰ Just as the first founding of Rome by the semi-feral Romulus had to be reinforced with a more legitimate re-founding by Aeneas, prince of Troy, so the noble lineage of Los Angeles could nod to Spanish origins, but must track its modern descent from Anglo-Saxons.

Los Angeles community builders, in fact, strove to represent what they called the history of Southern California's "discovery, settlement, and progress" by elevating it to the level of performance that all "the great Southern cities of the world" presented. To this end, La Fiesta De

⁶⁸Ernesto Laclau insists that "only if a Hegelian type of teleology is added to Darwinism - which is totally incompatible with it - can an evolutionary process be presented as a guarantee of future transitions," but I argue that nineteenth-century evolutionists did not use Darwinism to forecast the future as much as to rationalize the present based on its relationship to the past. It is true that evolution has no direction from the start, but when current exigencies are regressed from the present to the past Darwinism provides the illusion that whatever is privileged now (as judged by social and economic performance, in the case of man) became so through successful struggle, which implies progression – and hence is inherently teleological. It is easy to see why nineteenth-century racial theorists could have interpreted evolutionary theory this way. But for Laclau's perspective see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mauffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Toward a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001).

⁶⁹Hill, 23.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 100.

Los Angeles, which was conceived and produced by Jewish Angeleno Max Meyberg, was first performed on April 10, 1894.⁷¹ Meyberg located the Los Angeles festival alongside “the Mardi Gras of New Orleans, the Flower Fair of Tallahassee, the Carnival of Rome, and other world famous festivals,” and the fiesta’s floats were organized and ordered in a “line of march” to illustrate “the progressive settlement of California.”⁷² The official program of the Fiesta introduced the history implied in the line of floats by proclaiming that “we can see the long trails of canvas-covered trains, toiling towards the setting sun, with their sturdy honest occupants, many of whose bones were left to whiten on the desert sands.” In spite of such danger, promoters declared, “these were days not without romance.”⁷³

Many of the floats (e.g. Landing of Cabrillo, Early Mining Days of ’49) became the archetypes for those that would anchor similar pageants throughout Southern California in the twentieth century, but several 1894 innovations hint to the sophisticated intersection of marketing myths and selectively engineered history that were boosting Los Angeles to prominence by subtly contouring the characteristics of space. The opening float, for example, was called “Los Angeles – City of Homes.” It identified the primacy of home ownership as the apex of an historical progression that would be revealed in the floats that followed. “Irrigation And Its Results” and “Prosperity in Sunshine” presented Anglo progress in making the land productive, but two other floats inadvertently reveal regional attitudes that are taking hold.

“The Boom of ‘86” was a remarkable testament to immigrant naiveté (quite self-effacing considering that most Angelenos were immigrants in 1894). The float consisted of flags promoting land purchases in Southern California; “Orange Land in Arroyo Seco” (dry trench),

⁷¹ See William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, op. cit.

⁷² Official Program Souvenir, “La Fiesta De Los Angeles” (Los Angeles: Merchants’ Association of Los Angeles, 1894) California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860-1990, CTP Box 5, Folder 6, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

⁷³ *ibid.*

“No Frost, No Fog, No Dust, No Cemetery,” “Lots, Lots, Lots More,” and “Corner Lots Only \$1,000 Per Inch.”⁷⁴ If surviving investors were making fun of immigrants who had been scammed in the late housing boom, they were also affirming their own evolutionary superiority. Authentic Angelenos were not fooled by the promises of an easy path to wealth and immortality; they were hard working, realistic, and by implication Anglo. It was clear that not only success, but history itself, belonged to the survivors. The original inhabitants of Los Angeles were organized on a single float: It was simply called “Prehistoric Float” and it was where Southern California Indians were gathered. Of course, the Indian era was only “prehistory” from the perspective of non-Indians, and this, the final float in the first Fiesta De Los Angeles, functioned not to valorize or include Indian society in the new metropolis, but to spatially isolate it and to erase it from history as soon as this last float had passed by the Fiesta Committee’s grandstand.

Pageants and booster mythologies were not always completely aligned. Boosters often provided contradictory fables about the origins of the Los Angeles area; the first non-Indians to set foot in the pueblo are not always described as “the scum of Sonora.” One of the more elaborate founding myths, like the earlier Fiesta De Los Angeles, was acted out in full regalia; it consisted of six acts (called “Episodes”), and a concluding Epilogue. The pageant, “The Birth of an Empire,” was first performed in 1919, at a time, according to the play’s narrator, “only one hundred and fifty years by the scrolls of history [since] this land of Southern California was inhabited save by a few wandering Indians.” Miss Jennie B. Lasby wrote and collaborated with A.M. Stanley to produce what they called “an allegorical pantomime” in the Orange County city of Santa Ana.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Program, “Fiesta De Los Angeles,” 1894.

⁷⁵ Pamphlet, Jennie B. Lasby, “The Birth of an Empire, Story of the Pageant,” n.d. [circa 1919], Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 40, Folder 4, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

Progressive era pageantry, according to historian David Glassberg, was “able to forge a renewed sense of citizenship out of the emotional ties generated by the immediate sensation of expressive, playful social interaction.”⁷⁶ This bond between leisure, culture, and citizenship was expressed in Lasby’s production, “The Birth of an Empire,” which was a thorough rehabilitation of nearly every Anglo founding myth that was ever conceived to justify, rationalize, and privilege white westerners over all others. In fact, produced only four years after D.W. Griffith’s blockbuster film *Birth of a Nation* opened in Santa Ana, it is reasonable to wonder if the pageant was not in some ways emulating those same Hollywood themes.

The opening narration declared that “we have come to Earth’s far limit—to a land untrodden, save by wandering savages, a lifeless wilderness; and now ‘tis ours to execute the mandate of our race and change this desert to a fertile land.” Reiterating the hypothesis that pre-Anglo settlements had been unable to manage the potentially prosperous Southern California environment, Episode One reminded us that “nature had decreed that her treasure house should be unlocked only by men of great resourcefulness and at the price of great labor.” Indians, we were told, had never thought to till the soil or store water, and it was only the Spanish padres (men “from the South”) who were able to transform this territory into “a land of plenty with great fields of grain, herds of feeding cattle and the home of happy and contented neophytes.” The pageant progressed through a triumphal narrative of agricultural success, culture from “Old Spain,” and prosperity (Indians have disappeared by Episode Three), only to conclude with a utopian epilogue declaring that “Tis no longer a fable! The earth heaves and rolls with its burden of wealth and each year of our growth brings new awe to a world e’er watchful of change. That the desert can bear and the wilderness bloom for humanity’s use. Yet the vision grows larger!”

⁷⁶ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 284.

Finally, in perfectly scripted Southern California teleology, the play fulfilled the California dream by concluding with a call and response, “Behold a land of homes. A land of pride and content.”

In the interwar period these founding myths not only confirmed the ascent of Anglo authority, but provided a foundation for those who would attempt to re-imagine the legal connection between the state, real estate developers, and Los Angeles’ Mexican past. These relations had been reconfiguring themselves in the contestations over racial covenants for two decades, but The Citizens Land Association, headed by the persistent twentieth-century squatter H. Newkirk Wheeler, brought the imaginary relationship between land and people to a place it had not been since the destruction of the Mexican-American ranchos after California annexation in 1850.⁷⁷ Wheeler asserted that much of Los Angeles and Orange County (save the original Spanish settlement of Los Angeles, which, the group insisted was “in fact still legally a Spanish Pueblo of four square leagues”), had been developed on “Conspiro Titles,” or lands purchased from an owner who had “no capacity in himself to acquire Government title to the lands.”⁷⁸ Wheeler’s contention that most of the land around Los Angeles was “government land,” was based on his theory that no documented Mexican (or Spanish) land grants ever had existed for these areas and, hence, the land was owned (according to the U.S. Constitution and treaties between Mexico and the United States) by the U.S. government and, under Section 2289 of the Federal Statutes (the Homestead Law), “every eligible American citizen [has] the right to take one hundred and sixty acres of agricultural public land for his use.”⁷⁹ Wheeler, while arguing this

⁷⁷ It is important to remember that the final decline of the *hacienda* system occurred after the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), when former-Mexican *hacendados* had elected to become United States citizens. It is for this reason that I am referring to them as Mexican-Americans.

⁷⁸ H. N. Wheeler, *Mexican Grant of United State Public Domain?* (Los Angeles: Citizens Land Association, 1932), Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 82, Folder 13, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

case for all Americans, laid his own (unsuccessful) claim to the elegant and choice real estate development of Palos Verdes.⁸⁰

As implausible as these claims might sound, the U.S. Senate did investigate Wheeler's assertions, but, as the *Los Angeles Times* headline of April 7, 1929 said, the "Committee Kills Hope of Homesteaders" when its "hearing on land titles ends with inquirers affirming validity of preset owners deeds." Wheeler kept arguing the case for at least seven more years, however, and his "movement" began to take on the appearance of an anti-government populist cult, arguing that the common man had been cheated out of the opportunity to own acreage in Southern California by corrupt politicians and capitalists.

Wheeler's argument seemed to be a nearly identical recapitulation of Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's account of nineteenth-century San Diego squatters in her novel *Squatter and the Don*.⁸¹ This same Anglo ploy had been quite successful against the embattled and overtaxed *Californio hacendados*, who could not survive the economic burdens required to defeat the squatters in U.S. courts, but it had absolutely no chance of success against (mostly Anglo) real estate developers who had long since built entire industries, communities, and cultures in the paradise of Southern California, which they had, in turn, stolen from the *Californios*. Still, the idea that Southern California, by virtue of its unique (if controversial) legal history of conflating land, identity, and opportunity, was at its core a domain where anyone (who was white) could own anything, did not seem out of place with the area's utopian heritage.

⁸⁰ Wheeler took the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to hear it.

⁸¹ Ruiz de Burton's novel was, in fact, based on real events, most probably the case of her friend, Mariano Vallejo, who lost all his California holdings to Anglo squatters challenging his grants.

Just about at the same time Wheeler was challenging California's Spanish and Mexican pasts, Upton Sinclair's End Poverty in California (EPIC) campaign for state gubernatorial office was mythologizing a transformation of California mission Indians into proto-socialists. "Land colonies, proposed by Upton Sinclair as one of the methods to 'End Poverty in California,'" asserted EPIC journalist Charles Kunzelman, "recall to mind some of the earlier days of California."⁸² This discourse demonstrated how deeply the mission myths were engrained in California culture, as even the culture of reform relied on them to establish legitimacy. Kunzelman attempted to connect Sinclair's planned utopian agricultural colonies to California's past by claiming that "history records that the early mission establishments were, in many respects, colonies. With their fields, their herds, their shops—they were, for the most part, social and economic units, self-sufficient and self contained."⁸³ Still, he pushed this analogy even further, insisting that on the missions, "Indians became very prosperous and, as a rule, very happy. It is a mistake to suppose that the missions belonged to the friars. They were the property of the Indians, and when they were confiscated by the dishonest and greedy politicians, who ruled California at that time, it was the Indian and not the Franciscans who were robbed."⁸⁴ The elegance of EPIC's narrative inversion is that it functioned to legitimize the idea of utopian colonies as a part of California history, rehabilitated the "European" (and by inference, Anglo) colonial project, and demonized proto-capitalism at the same time.

"Nobody was rich. Nobody was poor," Kunzelman concluded. "It was an age of easy toil, of prayer and song and laughter, of peace and existence wholly ideal."⁸⁵ This romanticized

⁸² Charles Kunzelman, "Land Colonies of Sinclair Plan Like Early California Missions," *Upton Sinclair's EPIC News*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (March 1934), Los Angeles, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Folder 6, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

mission narrative, not unlike the typical Los Angeles booster pageant, became utopian and eliminated racial difference by ignoring race; it could do so with near impunity because, in this case, racial difference had, in fact, been eliminated by near-genocide. In 1934, California's socialists were trying to claim a social institution, not through any real common identity or provenance, but through an imaginary connection to the land.

Though the Sinclair colonies never came to pass, new mainstream communities did come into existence by invoking similar types of land myths. There are echoes of early twentieth-century social zoning and imaginary geography in every suburb and city in the United States, but the record of discourse concerning city planning and change that enveloped Los Angeles and Orange County illuminates not only the racial and class-focused dimensions of city-building, but the ongoing struggles between urban and rural that, I argue, were driven by the early promotional myths about Los Angeles; myths that are still in the area's cultural memories today, but could be personally recalled by older "pioneer" residents as late as the 1950s and 1960s. The mid-century struggle to keep Southern California's neighborhoods white, perpetuated by home owner associations, had their origins in this earlier era when Anglo-Saxon mythology informed residential statutes and ordinances.⁸⁶

⁸⁶See, for example, a Tustin Heights Homeowners' Association leaflet from 1957. In 1957 suburbanization was looming at the border of Tustin Heights, "Orange County's Finest Residential Area." The vigilant Tustin Heights Association (Home Owner's Association) announced to area residents, "here comes another threat to our neighborhood: it's right on us." The threat they saw coming was a development that would bring multiple-family housing, a food market, bar & liquor store, restaurant, service station, retail stores, office building, thirty-five rental guest cottages ("which is another name for a Motel") and a 300 ft. by 1000 ft. driving range to the edge of their neighborhood. "Multiple Family Housing and Cluster Subdivisions, together with conventional subdivisions and 'Planned Developments,'" the Association insisted, "will add to our area a population of 2,478 people. This will open the gates all over our area for more shopping centers and more multiple-family housing." Most tellingly, the Association asked residents, "Did we move out into this country area to be surrounded by this Bronx-like population?"⁸⁶ The Association might have been referring to population density when it compared the proposed changes in Tustin to the Bronx, but given that nothing in the development plans actually resembled the urban-type of vertical building or density one would find in a New York borough, it is plausible that there also was a racial undertone in this "warning" leaflet. By the 1950s, as the Civil Rights Movement gained national visibility, and in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, white supremacists were beginning to replace the overt, unapologetic, racial language that had predominated since the end of the Civil War, and had been encoded in Southern California

Euphemisms like “the right kind of people” had always been used to convey racial meanings in real estate advertisements, but beginning in mid-century, more sophisticated ideas like “property value” began to serve as proxies for racial identification. Urban planning scholars, in fact, have posited that zoning ordinances, housing statutes, and deed covenants have long been used to create racial separation under the guise of maintaining property value.⁸⁷

In Los Angeles we can find this theory of separation active in the very earliest modern settlement, where the illusion that the territory augured a white frontier was dominant.⁸⁸ This, in effect, was a part of the utopian imaginary that was necessary to recruit labor and capital to the area. In 1910, for example, the new hillside Panama Acres⁸⁹ housing subdivision, “just west of Athens-On-The-Hill, overlooking Gardena, San Pedro and Wilmington,” promoted its \$650 and up lots as “ideal home site[s]” with suitable building and race restrictions.”⁹⁰ The prominent developer Janss Investment Company declared that “you can buy a home on easy terms,” and offered its bungalows and lots midway between Los Angeles and Pasadena. The development had “every city convenience,” including the fact that it was “a restricted neighborhood.”⁹¹ But explicit development-wide racial restrictions were only one method of building a white

residential deeds since the early twentieth century, with more subtle undertones of discrimination. From an untitled Tustin Heights Association leaflet/letter to residents (n.d. 1957), Don Meadows Papers, MS RO1, Box 50, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁸⁷ Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States* (Washington D.C. and Cambridge, MA: Brookings Institution Press and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1997), 148.

⁸⁸ As historian Eric Avila asserts, “at the outset of the twentieth century, Los Angeles entertained a set of racialized fantasies that depicted the region as a southwestern outpost of white supremacy. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 20.

⁸⁹ Naming a development after “Panama” drew connections to the Panama Canal project, which boosters insisted would create a windfall of commercial opportunity for Los Angeles. This name, in effect, advertised the “get rich quick” opportunity without needing any further explanation.

⁹⁰ Advertisement, *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 37, Number 191, April 10, 1910, page 7.

⁹¹ Display Ad, *The American Globe*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (January 1912): 10.

community, and by the 1950s they were being replaced by less overt mechanisms that had the same effect.

In beach communities, which since the 1890s had faced legal restrictions on their ability to segregate access to the oceanfront, measures to preemptively thwart racially integrated residential zones were stronger and began earlier. In 1937 the city of Hermosa Beach, which called itself “The Aristocrat of the California Beaches,” drew its line in the sand, publicly announcing that the city’s “original deeds prohibit renting property to colored people.” The city wanted to make sure that all Southland residents understood that “this prohibition is being enforced.” It was not an obsolete law that popular custom could ignore; it was an essential boundary of modernity.⁹²

Restrictive deeds, while similar to the racial restrictions developers used in their subdivisions, went even further – they imagined a long-term (sometimes fifty years) restriction assigned to the occupation of an individual house. These deeds prohibited non-white residency, even after racial restrictions on ownership had been determined to be unconstitutional. This, in fact, was a legal condition unique only to California and Michigan, where courts had ruled (*Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary* in 1919 and *Janss Investment Co. v. Walden* in 1925) that restrictive covenants alienating property sales were unlawful, but such restrictions were valid conditions if applied only to occupancy.⁹³ This had the effect of appearing to allow people of color to purchase homes that, by individual deed covenants, they could not occupy.

⁹²“Excludes Colored Race,” *EPIC News* (Vol. 3, No. 47, April 19, 1937), 4, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

⁹³Monchow, *The Use of Deed Restrictions*, 50.

As contrived as this formulation sounds, it was often an enforceable statute, though, as an article from the *Los Angeles Times*, reprinted in the *California Eagle* dated January 29, 1916 illustrates, there was a great deal of juridical disagreement about such restrictive provisions.⁹⁴ A “colored Los Angeles city police officer,” who several months prior to this event had completed the purchase of a home at 420 West 59th Place, was confronted by the Title Guarantee and Trust Company with a deed that contained a clause (construed to be a covenant) prohibiting the sale or occupation of the property “to any person of African, Chinese or Japanese descent.”⁹⁵ Title Guarantee, moreover, filed suit and had been successful in obtaining a temporary injunction forbidding the officer from occupying his home.

The first court adjudicating the case, however, ruled in favor of Garrott, and, significantly, the California Court of Appeal upheld the ruling against the plaintiff – not on the basis of the fourteenth amendment, which it held did not apply – but by inverting the normal claim that the right to restrict was a protection against alienation of property. The court ruled, instead, that the restriction itself was an impermissible alienation because it violated section 711 of the Civil Code, which stated that “conditions restraining alienation, when repugnant to the interest created, are void.”⁹⁶ The court recognized, however, that it was in disagreement with other rulings about restricting property sales or occupancy to African Americans, and the ability to enforce such discriminatory contracts was not overturned irrefutably for another three decades.

⁹⁴“The Attitude of Official Authority with Regard to Negro Property Owners,” *California Eagle*, Vol. 28, January 29, 1916, 1.

⁹⁵ *Title Guarantee Trust Co. v. Garrott*, 183 P. 470 (Cal. App. 1919), Decided July 10, 1919. Court of Appeal of California, Second District, Division Two. Accessed online at <http://casetext.com/case/title-guarantee-trust-co-v-garrott>, October 25, 2014.

⁹⁶ In essence the ruling argued that restraining alienation was in and of itself an illegal ‘alienation’ under certain conditions. It demonstrates the legal and linguistic contortions that were necessary to avoid a binding fourteenth amendment – equal protection under the law – ruling.

Dreamers of new communities employed yet another technique to control neighborhood composition, and this one targeted not only racial minorities, but was designed to filter out lower (and sometimes middle) classes of all races. In addition to racial restrictions, developers employed what were called building restrictions, whereby, even if the price of land was inexpensive and affordable to a wide swath of the population (thus enabling the good publicity that led to quick sales and rapid development), the regulations of the development could specify the lower limit the landowner must spend on building a house. So, for example, the new development subdivided in 1904 known as Wilshire Boulevard Heights insisted that “building restrictions [would be] placed at a minimum of \$4,000 to \$5,000.”⁹⁷ This was between three and four times the average price to build a home in Los Angeles at the time and would have substantially narrowed the segment of the population who could afford “the Path of Destiny” such neighborhoods offered.⁹⁸

While not everyone would agree to racial restriction, and there were proto-blockbusters as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, race restrictions in early Los Angeles usually garnered very little opposition, and only led to an expansion of Jim Crow-type practices in the ensuing decades. By the 1930s, racial discrimination permeated all aspect of Angeleno social life, but few important Los Angeles radical or liberal groups devoted very much attention to race at all. Even when they did, it was not necessarily to address African-American problems.

An editorial written by EPIC newsman Lars Skattebol in 1937 exemplified this. While its bold headline was entitled “Abolish Race Hate,” it contested, not Southern California’s tightening Jim Crow restrictions, but Senate Bill No. 749, “making it unlawful for any alien not

⁹⁷“New Home Spot: Popular Wilshire Boulevard Tract, Residential Addition on the Market, Streets to BE Graveled and All Lots Extend to Alleys—Modern Arches Will Adorn the Entrance,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume XXXII, Number 8, October 9, 1904.

⁹⁸Advertisement, “Athens-On-The-Hill,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 37, Number 191, April 10, 1910, column 1, page 8.

eligible to citizenship to possess or use any real property, agricultural lands in particular” and another bill, “No. 754, [which] forbids fishing or assisting in the operation of fishing projects without a license, and denies a license to any but citizens of the United States who have been residents of California for at least one year.” The purpose of these bills, Skattebol goes on to explain “is aimed at the Japanese who fish and farm in California.” Representing the position of EPIC, he concluded that “discrimination of race against race is a prime cause of bloodshed and disorder and is peculiar to capitalism.” Skattebol demanded that “these bills, and all bills that outlaw any race, should be killed.”⁹⁹ Yet in all the years it existed and with over two-hundred editorials written about Los Angeles’s political and economic issues, this was the only one *EPIC News* ever published about race; there were none about African Americans; none about the Scottsboro boys or lynching; and only five articles (out of approximately two thousand) of any type (not editorials) that even mentioned problems of African Americans.¹⁰⁰

It is possible that the minor attention paid to Japanese, which still exceeded the amount of ink given to African Americans or Mexican Americans, harkened back to the idea of racial hierarchy, but this was only part of the explanation. This silence was also another manifestation of erasing race that was an intimate companion of utopia. Upton Sinclair admitted as much in a 1962 interview with Princeton historian Eric Goldman when he acknowledged that “I had never thought about minorities as being any special class. I thought they were to a great extent the dispossessed or unpossessed classes and they were part of the American people and they were victims of all these different kinds of class dominance. And if you got honest newspapers and if you got honest education and if you got honest socially-minded churches all the people, rich and poor, would share in the benefits.” Sinclair acknowledged that “I never have dealt with

⁹⁹Lars Skattebol, “Abolish Race Hate,” *EPIC News*, Vol. 3, No. 46, April 12, 1937, 8, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

¹⁰⁰This is based on my own content analysis of the entire run of *EPIC News* from Dec.1933 through July 1938.

foreigners as foreigners or with Negroes as Negroes. When we have social justice in the economic field,” he contends, “all these other things will come.”¹⁰¹ The best that can be said for the relationship between EPIC – arguably the most influential radical movement in Southern California at the time – and the “race problem,” was succinctly noted by historian Douglas Flamming, “As for EPIC and Sinclair, they did not really understand race.”¹⁰²

What EPIC did understand as it promoted the idea of workers’ colonies to transform the capitalist economic system, were the issues that seemed to affect industrial and agricultural labor. In fact, in its later years the *EPIC News* was mostly devoted to covering national, and especially Californian, labor struggles. The preeminence of labor issues for the movement helps to explain the perspective about Japanese-owned agriculture – it reflects an argument about Japanese-Californians’ relationship to the land that liberals put forward in 1913 (in an attempt to defeat the bill that became the Alien Land Law). Namely, that Japanese entrepreneurship was important for the regional rural economy. If the urban problems of African Americans did not play an important part in the ideology of Los Angeles as a cooperative utopia, the agricultural concentration of Japanese residents was important to the area’s struggle to retain “rural residential” character in expanding suburbs.

In fact, Dona Brown, in her recent study, *Back To The Land*, observed that white Angelenos who attempted to form utopian garden-farm communities should have looked to the immigrant Japanese as success models, since they were actually thriving at the kind of farming these colonists wanted to pursue.¹⁰³ That it would have been difficult to publicly admire Japanese farming in California after the passage of the Alien Land Law is without much question, but it is

¹⁰¹Transcript from *The Open Mind*, aired Sunday May 6, 1962 on NBC Television, Upton Sinclair Collection, Leon Harris Correspondence, Box 3, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

¹⁰²Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 313.

¹⁰³ Dona Brown, *Back To The Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 127.

also true that the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce did write positively about Japanese contributions in 1915 – only two years after passage of the bill. Similarly, poultry utopian Charles Weeks wrote about his admiration for Japanese urban farming, though his model farms were in Japan, not California. Urban farming in Los Angeles, though it might have looked toward the expertise of people of color, was conceived and operated within an entirely Anglo context. This, moreover, would set the groundwork for mid-century suburbanization, which simply extended this Anglo-only context, retaining the garden, but plowing the farm under the swimming pool and car port.

Home, land, gender, and race were always connected in California and were all implicated in the search for an ideal world – even a better world. This, in itself, was typical of many spaces in nineteenth-century America, but because Californian attachments to homelands were not longstanding and were rooted more in ideas and emotions than in a history of real bonding to a physical environment, such attachments tended to rely more on the reinvention of past, present, and desirable future social relations than on material connections. The area's virulent anti-Chinese movement, for example, could trace its origins almost to the time the first Chinese immigrants made their homes in Southern California in 1850.¹⁰⁴ Even before this new immigrant population had arrived in significant numbers, Anglo residents perceived their presence as a threat to an imagined future. The infamous Chinese lynchings in 1871 Los Angeles were an apex – not the sudden eruption – of Anglo-nativist bigotry that had been ongoing in the pueblo.

¹⁰⁴ Carey McWilliams notes that the census of 1850 lists two Chinese residents of Los Angeles, but that other traditions claim either that the first two residents came with Joseph Newmark as servants in 1854, or that a Chinese person was a member of the original colony of settlers in 1781. (A “chino” in the original stories potentially is a complex racial construction and does not necessarily mean Chinese, but could mean a Mexican that is “Chinese-looking” or could refer to the *systema de castas* designation for the offspring of a mulatto and an Indian, or even specifically to a Filipino – my notation.) Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrin and Smith, 1979), 84.

Conventional historiography, anchored by the work of Varden Fuller and Carey McWilliams in the 1930s and 1940s, attributes anti-Chinese sentiment primarily to economic competition, especially in California's mining and agriculture industries. More recently historian Sucheng Chan has overturned this simplistic explanation. She does confirm that acute outbreaks of anti-Chinese actions often coincided with harsh economic times, but complicates the situation by noting that, with the exception of local circumstances in various small California areas, Chinese laborers never constituted a particularly high percentage of workers and, moreover, though they worked for lower wages than white Californians, their wages were equivalent to or higher than white workers performing the same jobs outside of California.¹⁰⁵

California was influential in stimulating a sentiment culminating in the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prohibiting the immigration of most Chinese to the United States. In spite of this, Chinese continued to remain active in California's agricultural industries for some time. The twenty-thousand or so Chinese who lived in Southern California in 1880 were, as Carey McWilliams noted, "a sizable part of the population," and by 1895 "about four-thousand Chinese were producing and distributing nearly all the vegetables consumed in Los Angeles."¹⁰⁶ Truck gardening – small production and door-to-door selling of a variety of vegetables – was one agricultural niche that Chinese did dominate for a short period of time.¹⁰⁷

Though they were clearly productive (in fact, many immigrated to California with agricultural skills), one of the racist canards against the Chinese was that they saved rather than consumed. Lack of ambition and desire made them bad consumers and unfit for modern

¹⁰⁵Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1930* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 303.

¹⁰⁶McWilliams, *Southern California*, 85.

¹⁰⁷Chan posits that the sheer convenience of door to door vegetable delivery sustained the Chinese Truck Gardening industry even in the face of the Chinese Exclusion Act and anti-Chinese sentiment.

American society.¹⁰⁸ Anglos contended that such social and behavioral differences, as expressed by patterns of consumption, were, in fact, what in the final analysis made Chinese immigrants incompatible with Americans. Work ethic was not the issue, but citizenship through appropriate consumer behavior certainly was.

Carey McWilliams, on the other hand, continued to see economic competition as a contributor to racial hatred in the Southland. It was Chinese success in fishing and agriculture, according to McWilliams, that prompted the increase in anti-Chinese sentiment. He noted that they were largely responsible for developing Southern California's lucrative fishing industry, built an entirely new million dollar a year abalone export business in Los Angeles, and pioneered celery culture in the region. I would not deny that economic competition figured into anti-Chinese sentiment, but it was the evolving body of literature about race and society that fundamentally transformed the perceptions of what whiteness and non-whiteness meant.

In the citrus industry Chinese labor helped to sustain the growth of the 1880s, but, whereas in other agricultural productions, such as vegetables, Chinese were often tenant farmers or even landowners, with regard to fruit orchards and vineyards they were laborers, so the economic benefits were accruing almost exclusively to Anglo farm owners. As one contemporary said, these laborers were even cheap when compared to African American slaves, because "no capital outlay" was required.¹⁰⁹ And "cheap," as Chan pointed out, did not necessarily refer only to wage competition; Chinese workers, who tended to be single men (or at least men whose families had not migrated to California), could more easily work only during

¹⁰⁸ Michael O'Malley, *Face Value: The Entwined Histories of Money & Race in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 144.

¹⁰⁹ Dr. Varden Fuller, cited in McWilliams, *Southern California*, 91.

peak harvests and did not have to be maintained during other periods, which white hired hands (whose compensation more often included room and board) usually did.¹¹⁰

Notably, while anti-Chinese rhetoric and legislation centered on labor economics, so did pro-Chinese, pro-immigration, arguments. Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of the myths and misconceptions about Chinese labor was written by George Seward, the former United States Minister to China, and published by Scribner and Sons in 1881, just one year before passage of the Anti-Chinese Immigration Act. “The Chinese,” Seward asserted, “have been of great service to the people of the Pacific Coast,” and, his study declared, “the objections which have been advanced against them are in the main unwarranted.” Seward delineated, and discussed in some depth, Chinese participation in – but certainly not dominance of – a range of industries that were important to the growth of Southern California, from railroad work, reclamation of swamp lands, farming, and fruit cultivation.¹¹¹

While “the spirit of exaggeration” had characterized anti-Chinese partisans since the 1870s, Seward maintained that the existing populations and predicted immigration rates nationally and in California were not as large as popularly supposed, and immigrant workers had not taken jobs from white laborers.¹¹² To Seward, there was no need for the proposed restrictive immigration legislation, but, while this may be a compelling economic argument, the wave of racial science that purported to provide the basis for planning a better society in areas like California began to overwhelm other considerations.

Because of their cost-effectiveness and hard work ethic, capitalists had aggressively recruited Chinese for railroad construction and farm labor. The Chamber of Commerce admired

¹¹⁰ Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 277.

¹¹¹ George F. Seward, *Chinese Immigration: In its Social and Economic Aspects* (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1881), vii.

¹¹² *ibid.*, 15.

Japanese entrepreneurship and believed that their farming and mercantile skills would benefit the growth of Los Angeles. It may have been that economic advantages overpowered racial preferences, yet it is far more likely that capitalists, reaching back to pre-Darwinian notions of ethnicity, were able to compartmentalize the spaces where Asians could fit within society, and these continued to be socially, economically, and politically restricted, but at least available. This was, as Robert Blauner first characterized it in 1972, a variety of “internal colonialism” where elements of coercion and cultural destruction functioned to subjugate a labor force necessary to build up the Southern California infrastructure.¹¹³

The Los Angeles masses, on the other hand, and this included most of the labor and political leadership of the socialist left, were animated by an explicitly anti-Asian spirit.¹¹⁴ Along with economic competition, scientific socialism and the racism of California eugenics underpinned the utopian planning that promised a better Los Angeles through racial and class homogeneity.¹¹⁵ To modern Angelenos it may now seem confusing that the democratic progress

¹¹³ Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1972), 52-53, in Timothy P. Fong, “A New and Dynamic Community: the Case of Monterey Park, CA,” in *Asian and Latino Immigrants in a Restructuring Economy: The Metamorphosis of Southern California*, ed. by Marta Lopez-Garza and David R. Diaz, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 323.

¹¹⁴ A remarkable example of how this racism overpowered freedom movements is cited by Philip Foner in his compendium, *We the Other People: Alternative Declarations of Independence by Labor Groups, Farmers, Woman’s Rights Advocates, Socialists, and Blacks 1829 – 1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976). “The American Wage-Worker’s Declaration of Independence,” published by the Federated Trades of the Pacific Coast on July 4, 1886, paraphrases the U.S. Declaration of Independence and harshly indicts the exploiters of America’s workers, who are called “Millionaires, Monopolists, and Aristocrats.” The document proclaims that “they already have the nucleus of a class living without labor on inherited wealth. Some of them have purchased titles of nobility from foreign potentates, one for instance having knelt for the accolade at the hands of a half-breed chieftain of Polynesia!” This is a racist reference to Queen Liliuokalani, the ruler of Hawaii; capitalist exploitation of this non-Anglo country was not an issue that the workers of the Federated Trades of the Pacific Coast believed constituted any part of the assertion of rights for which they were struggling. Pages 132-135. Interestingly, the pejorative reference to Polynesia was also commonly used by Edward Bellamy. See Edward Bellamy, “Looking Backward Again,” *The North American Review*, Volume 150, Number 400 (March 1890): 351-363.

¹¹⁵ Ironically, the Nationalist antipathy toward Chinese immigration contrasts with the fact that the “bible” for their movement, *Looking Backward*, had, in fact, at least three important Chinese translations, the first of which appeared in China by 1891, only three years after the book’s publication in America. One Chinese scholar sees Bellamy’s work as being extremely influential on the Chinese reform movement of the period. See Chang-fang Chen, “Barbarian Paradise: Chinese Views of the United States, 1784-1911,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, department of East Asian language and cultures, Indiana University, 1985, 369-384.

of the citizen referendum was used to construct a racist city, but to reformers like Dr. John Randolph Haynes, who advocated for both referendum and eugenics, it seemed a rational and appropriate mechanism to enforce popular conceptions of morality through the rule of law. The “Keep America White” campaign that resulted was intended primarily to disinherit Asian landowners and producers, but its repercussions also could be felt in the state’s enforcement of broader miscegenation laws, immigrant quotas, and racially segregated public facilities for decades to come.

The immediate result of the campaign, however, was California Initiative No. 1 on the ballot of the November 2, 1913 election. Notwithstanding arguments about Japanese agricultural productivity, the initiative called for prohibiting Japanese who were classified as ineligible for citizenship from owning or even leasing land. Those who already owned or leased land were to have it confiscated. Such legislation was being proposed in an atmosphere of renewed nativism and enthusiasm for racial theories promoting whiteness above all other appearances, but there was also a vocal, though ultimately unsuccessful, movement to defeat what was being proposed as the Alien Land Law.

Playing off the nativist “Keep America White” campaign, along with the Japanese concentration in California’s agricultural and gardening industries,¹¹⁶ the Pacific American League called their campaign “Keep America Green,” and instructed voters to “Vote ‘NO’ on the Alien Land Law (Initiative Act 1) when you mark your ballot on Election Day, Nov. 2.” Interestingly, the NO campaign could play both to Californians who were anti-racist and to those who were white-supremacists by presenting an argument combining the appeal that “this is cruel

¹¹⁶ The Chinese Exclusion Act did, in fact, play a role in Chinese leaving Southern California’s agricultural industries, but it occurred more gradually and for different reasons than commonly has been attributed to it. Chinese laborers were not replaced by Japanese or Mexican laborers en masse, but, rather, began to leave the farms that they leased when they could not hire enough Chinese laborers to sustain their own businesses. See Sucheng Chan, *op. cit.*

and unfair to the Japanese and a violation of the American idea of square deal,” and the exhortation to “remember, you are not voting on Japanese Exclusion. That is for Washington to Decide. The Alien Land Law deprives the Japanese of even the right to rent land to raise vegetables. That means a scarcity of vegetables and higher prices for food.”¹¹⁷ In spite of this appeal, the proposition was passed and overwhelmingly confirmed by the California Senate and Assembly. There is evidence, however, that, while this popular measure reflected a clear anti-Japanese sentiment among Californians, even the conservative Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce saw the merit in promoting Japanese agricultural entrepreneurship, and enforcement of these restrictions was not comprehensive.

The type of nativism leading to legislation like the Alien Land Law began to gain momentum at a time when, according to the campaign manager for Job Harriman during his 1911 bid to become the first socialist mayor of Los Angeles, “Los Angeles [was] the most socialist city in America.”¹¹⁸ At least it seemed that way to those who, like Alexander Irvine, worked on Harriman’s campaign. To be sure, there were loud, moneyed interests on all sides of the political spectrum, but prominent Angelenos – especially those who dabbled in recreating a social environment by building it – were not strangers to socialism.

In the next chapter, we will consider how both socialism and capitalism supported the idea of the white city, and explore the way Los Angeles community builders drew from fictional literature to provide an aura of character and hopefulness in spite of the natural and man-made problems Southland development would encounter.

¹¹⁷ “Pacific American League, California Election Recommendation,” Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 68, Folder 9, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

¹¹⁸ Alexander Irvine, *Revolution in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: n.p., 1911), 8.

CHAPTER 3: POURING THE FOUNDATION

In 1910 King Camp Gillette, inventor of a better razor and would-be inventor of a better social system, proposed a “World Corporation,” where everyone would live in a centralized metropolis and, as under Bellamy’s Nationalism, all industry would be owned by one giant government trust. This was a decade or so before he began to invest in more modest and personal paradises in Palm Springs and Calabasas. “Promoters are the true socialists of this generation,” Gillette wrote. In his system corporate capitalists and socialists were the same individuals, empowered to plan society without politics through a single “corporate party” around which the masses would rally because they were to have financial equity rather than democratic suffrage rights.¹ “The actual builders of a co-operative system which is eliminating competition,” Gillette went on to say, were the capitalists, and “in a practical business way [they were] reaching results which socialists have vainly tried to attain through legislation and agitation for centuries.”²

Gillette may have exaggerated the connection between capitalism and utopia, as did Bellamy before him, but nevertheless he was articulating the kind of potential for change that people in Southern California wanted to believe in. Nineteenth-century European cities may have needed well conceived community plans to avoid insurrections, but Los Angeles municipal government did not. There were no concerns about putting down a proletarian uprising in this primitive space.³ Instead, much of the Southland public proclaimed that from capitalism to

¹ King Camp Gillette, *The World Corporation* (Boston: George H. Ellis printers, 1910), 56.

² *ibid.*, 9.

³ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 150. Berman asserts that new cities of the nineteenth century were intended to bring order to heterogeneous space. They were planned in grids; narrow streets were transformed into wide boulevards lined with grand public buildings. Wide public avenues were created in response to the people’s barricades of 1789 and 1848. It would be harder to erect barricades across wide streets and rectangular grids of parallel and perpendicular streets favored regular mounted military and artillery over irregular people’s militias. In this way, nineteenth-century urban

cooperation was not such a long distance, and certainly not one that required revolution. Space in the Southland could be protected without planning a city that could be secured against its citizens; business plans (like Gillette's proposal for the World Corporation) would be sufficient.

Growth was certainly planned by city officials and boosters, but instead of being seen as a continuation of past traditions, this actually reinforced the myth that Los Angeles had previously been an unplanned metropolis. This formulation was not capricious, and it was not innocent. It was intermingled with the old myth that Mexicans had been poor and ineffective custodians of the land – actually unable to plan modern growth. In 1901 James Guinn, curator of the Historical Society of California, asserted that “fifty years after its founding, Los Angeles was like the earth on the morning of creation—‘without form.’ It had no plat or plan, no map and no official survey of its boundaries.”⁴ Lending credence to the endless Anglo efforts to invalidate first *Californio* and later all land titles, Guinn also maintained that “No man held a written title to his land and possession was ten parts of the law; indeed it was all the law he had to protect his title.”⁵ This was not entirely true, though many such titles were recorded in Mexico, not Los Angeles. Nevertheless, these concepts functioned to sustain the idea that pre-Anglo Los Angeles was a land of *bárbaros*, which lacked any important history that had survived into the twentieth century. In such areas, planners were free to lay out cities for convenience and beauty rather than protecting an established order.

planning intrinsically privileged the established social order, making it less likely that mass democracy could ever stage a successful uprising in a modern urban setting. This is an assertion Eric Hobsbawm also supports in “Cities and Insurrections,” *Global Urban Development*, Vol. 1, Issue 1 (May 2005): 4.

⁴ James M. Guinn, *Historical and Biographical Record of Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1901), 105.

⁵ *ibid.*

This was, in fact, the Los Angeles pattern and, while the dominant power bases like the Chandlers, Shermans, Huntingtons, and their supporters in the infamous police department certainly did their best to silence the voices of non-Anglo masses and constrain the voices of the Anglo masses (especially labor), strong movements for women's suffrage, initiative and ballot referenda, and a new city charter enabling the recall of elected officials had been underway since the 1890s. All these ideas about mass democracy would, in fact, succeed in Los Angeles by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century.

Though Western cities did not normally plan any form of entertainment for the masses at all, Los Angeles real estate investors, builders, and boosters had, since the beginning, broken through these limitations by envisioning something more comprehensive, and maybe somewhat more egalitarian. Recreation, in fact, was part and parcel of an appropriate Pacific Coast life, and the beach itself – as Long Beach boosters maintained – might be conceived to be a “community healthier, physically, socially, or morally” than any other place in California.⁶ Pleasure piers, dotting the coastline from Abbot Kinney's Venice of America and Ocean Park's Bristol Pier to Redondo Beach, Long Beach (the Pike), Seal Beach's famous Jewel City Café, Bowling Alley and Joy Zone (one of many fully functional amusement parks) had established a recreational (and Chautauqua) Mecca for bathers, thrill seekers, and even adult learners by 1916.⁷ If these modern facilities illuminated the highest potential of California real estate investment, they also constituted places on the western edges of the city where deviation could enter everyday Southland life.⁸ Pleasure piers enabled Angelenos to temporarily consume culture and morality

⁶ Booklet, *Long Beach – City by the Sea* (n.c.: n.p., 1900), 31.

⁷ Jennifer Lynn Krintz, “Pleasure Piers & Promenades: The Architecture of Southern California's Early Twentieth Century Beach Resorts,” unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Georgia, 2009, 51.

⁸ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986): 22-27. In this essay based on a lecture given in 1967, Foucault developed the idea of heterotopias. Unlike utopias, which are unreal, heterotopias exist in the real world and establish sites where deviations in time and social meaning take place. Pleasure piers have this quality. But amusements in Los Angeles contrast sharply with Atlantic Coast development, where vacation areas were built

in a classless, genderless, and almost (but not entirely) raceless space. Los Angeles, in fact, was peppered with spaces that could appear to bring together what in other venues were contradictory forces.

When, for example, a new city charter for Los Angeles was proposed by real estate owning citizens and the conservative Merchants and Manufacturers' Association in May of 1900, socialist landowners were prominent in the citywide discussions. Gaylord Wilshire gave the keynote address at a socialist meeting to discuss the new charter and according to the *Los Angeles Herald* reporter who was present, "Wilshire concurred in the general opinion of the necessity of a new charter. He was not opposed to the concentration of power in the hands of a mayor, as he recognized as much as any one [sic] the necessity of concentration, both to secure good administration and to afford the public an opportunity to fix responsibility for bad administration."⁹ The *Herald* reporter noted that the idea of centralizing power in a mayor or city council was not opposed by the socialist audience, so long as the power of recall was vested in the people. The "people," in this case, were landowners (the reporter maintained that nine out of ten signers of the petition in favor of the city charter were landowners), albeit socialist ones.

This is not to say that Los Angeles landowners were, in total, any more interested in egalitarian social order than anyone else; in fact it may represent a more complex dynamic. Socialism and the right to individual property ownership were both heartfelt beliefs to many Angeleno activists, in part because the area was caught in a rather unique economic-social complex that aligned ideas and interest groups differently from the way they were configured elsewhere. What seemed to be an incongruous association of collectivism with individualism,

to be accessible from cities rather than to actual be integrated into the city. Los Angeles developers conceived of such heterotopias as zoned within the city itself.

⁹"H Gaylord Wilshire Addresses Socialists on the New Charter," *Los Angeles Herald*, May 14, 1900, accessed online <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?>, July 14, 2014.

private with common property, or white supremacy with the need to recruit and house immigrants, could be rationalized through arguments one could piece together from popular literature that helped people visualize new social concepts about modern communities.

Popular fiction, with characters, plots, and settings that illustrated new possibilities for a reading public that was grappling with social upheaval helped to mold a consciousness that played out in land investment and community building. In 1917 Randolph Bourne had called this kind of writing “sociologic fiction,” explaining that “the theory is, of course, that the fictional form will make them [the novels] more widely read.”¹⁰ Bourne had no objection to this fictional form of reality, demanding only that the novel’s “sociology be sound and true, and its message ‘urgent.’”¹¹

Truth was certainly visible in Marie Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s dramatization of the plight of the *Californio*’s and in Helen Hunt Jackson’s account of California Indian suffering in *Ramona*, though both were highly romanticized and neither was perceived by the public to be focused on a particularly urgent message. Bellamy’s writing, on the other hand, perhaps because the genre of speculative fiction (what we would later classify as science fiction) was expected to warn, predict, and suggest a better way, seemed to have landed on a message that the public did consider both to be urgent and scientifically informed: Anglo society was deteriorating due to uses of technology that alienated workers from the material they produced. This was perceived to be intrinsic to individualistic capitalism, and a roadmap toward a new cooperative society, where Americans could overcome what Bourne had called the “ingenuity of extortion,” had to be

¹⁰ Randolph Bourne, “Sociologic Fiction,” *The New Republic*, XII (October 27, 1917), 359-360, in *Randolph S. Bourne, War and the Intellectuals: Collected Essays, 1915-1919*, ed. by Carl Resek (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1964), 176.

¹¹ *ibid.*

plotted.¹² This Bellamy accomplished by demonstrating that man could use “the machine” (technology) to enable cooperation rather than to promulgate wage slavery. His critique of nineteenth-century industry focused on the idea that “corporations were preparing for them [for mankind] the yoke of a baser servitude than had ever been imposed on the race, servitude not to men, but to soulless machines incapable of any motive but insatiable greed.”¹³ That machines could be repurposed to serve man seemed to Bellamy and his followers perhaps the greatest liberation imaginable.

Sherwood Anderson would revisit the issue of technology and society in his 1920 novel, *Poor White*, where he portrayed the mechanization of rural workers themselves, describing how the “machine-like swing of the bodies of the plant setters suggested vaguely to his [protagonist Hugh McVey’s] mind the possibility of building a machine that would do the work they were doing.”¹⁴ Critics usually focus on how Anderson problematized industrialization (H.L. Menken called him a “sort of uncertain social reformer” in his review of *Poor White*), and while this is an important reading of his work, Anderson also more specifically highlighted the conflict between city and country that westerners like the Los Angeles boosters were attempting to resolve.

At the beginning of the century, the Social Gospel movement, while also critiquing modernity, had proposed a very different solution, contending that cities were evolutionarily more fit than “country towns,” and encouraging what leaders called the Christianization of the West.¹⁵ This position on cities has been all but ignored by scholars, who tend to emphasize Social Gospel’s critique of the modern city by characterizing it as anti-urbanism. There is another more nuanced, and more practical, discourse within Social Gospel that actually

¹² Bourne, 178.

¹³ Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, 53.

¹⁴ Sherwood Anderson, *Poor White*, 1920 (New York: Viking Press, 1966), 79.

¹⁵ See Wilbert L. Anderson, *The Country Town: A Study of Rural Evolution* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co, 1906).

acknowledged the importance of the city and acquiesced to the idea that cities were, in fact, the lynchpins of America's future. Countering the popular conceptions about the perils of city life that people read in *Poor White*, or in Sinclair Lewis's and Theodore Dreiser's city novels, Social Gospel movement leaders like Josiah Strong and Wilbert Anderson asserted that one could achieve a moral life in the city.

In fact, they insisted that a moral life was more than a possibility in the city – it was an evolutionary certainty. Conversely, they warned those who valorized the utopian ideal of small town growth and prosperity that “the growing town possesses no moral insurance. The increase in population may be due to some industry that supports an alien and inferior labor colony.”¹⁶ Many country towns, they insisted, “have had an excess of inferior stock,” and life in such places expressed what Wilbert Anderson called “Darwinism reversed,” or “survival of the unfittest.”¹⁷ According to Anderson, “the best immigrate [to the city] and leave the country to the unfit.”¹⁸ Ultimately, Social Gospel theorists concluded that human stock could overcome heredity. In either city or country, by acting generously and in a godly way, utopia could be realized. Clearly, Los Angeles boosters appropriated Social Gospel's notions of rural and city “fitness,” but they innovatively located both the Arcadian attributes of the small town and the cultural sophistication of the city in a single place: the City of Angels.

One dialogue in Social Gospel concluded that environment could overcome race, and this may also help to explain why at least one notable novel, though it never achieved literary success, revealed insights about the history of racial ideas. Sutton Griggs, who was himself a Baptist minister, wrote an eloquent work of fiction in 1899, *Imperium in Imperio*, which was at the time unique in its production of an all African-American utopia. This civilization does

¹⁶Anderson, *Country Towns*, 98.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 142.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 143.

coexist with white society, but it operates unseen within it. In a sense it is the inverse of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's solution to the "Negro Problem," for African Americans in Griggs' society exhibit the skill, knowledge, and fortitude to operate their own separate society, but not in a separate territorial space; only in a separate metaphysical one.

Whether written by African Americans or Anglos, future societies were usually envisioned to be uni-racial; only W.E.B. Du Bois' 1920 short story "The Comet" explicitly portrays an interracial post-apocalyptic world (on earth, in any event), where what appear to be the only two surviving humans – the new Adam and Eve – are an African American man and an Anglo woman. This new world has the potential to become an interracial utopia – at least until the apocalypse turns out to have been limited to Manhattan, and surviving Anglos propose lynching the African American who had been accompanying the world's sole white female survivor.¹⁹

Still there is another utopia, written by a little known California novelist in 1884 – four years prior to the publication of *Looking Backward* – that does address racial difference in a way that illuminates the range of ideas that were active within radical movements in California. Some scholars classify the work of Alfred Denton Cridge, *Utopia or the History of an Extinct Planet*, as a dystopian fiction, though it can be read as an allegory through which Cridge argues in favor of specific political reforms that would move America toward a utopian future.²⁰ Our knowledge about Cridge's planet comes from the story's narrator, who is the main character's psychic guide. He is able to travel through time to provide a first-hand narrative of natural and cultural history

¹⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Comet," in *Darkwater, Voices from within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), 253.

²⁰ Alfred Denton Cridge was the son of Annie Denton Cridge, who wrote a feminist novel with a satirical utopian theme in 1870. The work was entitled *Man's Rights or How Would You Like It?* and contributed to the public discussion about gender and the domestic sphere. Notably, Annie Cridge also was considered to be a "psychometer" or person who was able to see the past from objects she touched; see Carol Farley Kessler, ed., *Daring to Dream: Utopian Stories by United States Women, 1836 – 1919* (Boston: Pandora Press, 1984), 74. Annie's belief in psychic phenomena seems to have influenced Alfred Cridge's writing.

since the beginning of life on Utopia. Cridge informs us – uncharacteristically for utopian novels of the era – that Utopia is populated with multiple races of people who have, over time, amalgamated so that they are now all similar and are citizens of a highly civilized city called Liberia. Such a conclusion contests the more common nineteenth-century belief promoted by eugenicists that the offspring produced through racial mixture would function at the level of the “lower” race. In this construct, Cridge’s un-earthly historical narrative challenged the emerging series of anti-miscegenation laws that were enacted in many states, during and after Reconstruction, including California.²¹

While Cridge seemed to contend that there was a way for all races to achieve equality, he was still encumbered by typical earthly racial stereotypes. As he explained Utopian history he noted that “in the far south side of the ocean lived a haughty black-eyed, coarse-haired people, who ruled by their intelligence and cruelty, the cringing, very ignorant black negrettoes.” Having previously recalled the history of chattel slavery on Utopia, which the amalgamated Liberian races had overcome, Cridge said of the non-Liberian negrettoes that, “these slaves were too cowardly to fight stubbornly for their rights and too treacherous to each other to combine.”²² While it might seem that Cridge is validating a principle of race science here, he is, in fact, formulating something different. This formulation is promoting an idea that is outside a conventional attitude toward race, for, while Cridge did embody the negrettoes with characteristics he called barbarian, he also concluded that they possessed inherent human rights for which, except for a moral flaw, they should have fought. Moral behavior on Utopia was an alien choice – not an inborn, racially transmitted trait.

²¹ See Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, for a thorough and insightful discussion of miscegenation law in California.

²² Alfred Denton Cridge, *Utopia or the History of an Extinct Planet* (Oakland, CA: Winchester & Pew Book and Job Printers, 1884), 9.

Cridge's political agenda was transparent, and it was detailed in what he asserted was an abstract of the Utopian constitution. The first article stipulated that "any person over ten 'periods' of age who could read and write Estravlian, the national language, without regard to sex, race, religion, or residence (if native born), could vote and hold any office in the gift of the Republic. Foreign born citizens could hold any office after being residents and citizens a certain time."²³ Other articles of the constitution provided for jury trials, abolished the death penalty, mandated one elected official for every thirty-thousand residents, identified three independent branches of government, and stipulated voting by direct election. In Utopia it was illegal for the government to contract any debt under any circumstances, and private debt was never binding, except that a laborer owed wages was considered as a part-owner of the property on which he worked until such wages were paid.²⁴

Cridge's alien constitution reflected many populist issues of the period. For example, Utopia specified that the volume of currency in circulation could not be raised above a certain level by constitutional limitation, and "no aid or countenance could be given to any religious institution, educational college or school, or any individual for any purpose, object or service, real or imaginary."²⁵ This principle reveals the period's concern about the influence of "Papist" (Catholic) school systems, but it was not intended to limit Utopia's social safety net, because most public services (land, water, highways, waterways, and means of transportation) were to be owned by the people. Government aid in other areas was still quite prominent. Finally, the constitution "especially declared that the people of the republic were to be the final appeal on any case, question, discussion, law, or whatever might be of national interest."²⁶ Like many

²³ Cridge, 21.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 22.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ *ibid.*, 23.

utopians and, of course, the Social Gospel movement, Cridge combined a social conscience with a vibrant spiritualism. In the end, while the planet Utopia failed because of environmental change, material life was transformed into pure spirit and continued on some different plane of existence. For Alfred Cridge, the path to human perfection was a spiritual one.

The need for spiritual growth was Cridge's message for late-nineteenth century Americans; he predicted a future when technology would enable high speed transportation, travel between planets, methods of food production without hard labor, and the end of brutality. But, he implored, such progress would be only temporary unless accompanied by spiritual growth and, ultimately, transformation. In this sense, Cridge's philosophy and social plan foreshadowed the combination of political and spiritual (e.g. populist, socialist, Theosophist) ideas that informed the incarnation of Bellamyite Nationalism in Southern California.

Unfortunately, though it cost only fifteen cents a copy (this was, however, three times the cost of a more entertaining "story-paper" during the era), we will never know how many novelettes Alfred Denton Cridge sold, or if his rather unique perspectives had any impact on radical movements or individuals in California or Los Angeles. In terms of literary history, Cridge's work is a minor entry in Glenn Negley's bibliography of utopian literature, and it is cited only in a hand full of footnotes in monographs about the history of American socialism. Yet, while the works of Bellamy and Gilman may have dominated book sales, surviving texts like Alfred Cridge's novel illustrate that a wide breadth of ideas circulated during the era. Lest historians fail to critique Gilman, Bellamy, or Sinclair because they expressed values within a framework of social theory we should not expect them to have transcended, it is revealing to see

that other views were in the air; people could have, and some people did, arrive at very different conclusions about race.²⁷

Poultry farming utopian Charles Weeks was not one of these people. He did not quote from Alfred Cridge, or W.E.B. Du Bois, though if he had been promoting a more inclusive vision of utopia it would have made sense to – since Cridge was a Californian with a message that could have fit the demographics of Los Angeles well, and Du Bois actually had spoken favorably to the press about housing for African Americans in Los Angeles when he visited the city in 1913, declaring L.A.’s African-American population to be “without doubt the most beautifully housed group of colored people in the United States.”²⁸ Instead Weeks valorized novelist George England’s vision of utopia, which, of all the contemporary literary utopias, (with the possible exception of Thomas Dixon’s attempt at utopian novels) was the one that was most overtly white supremacist.²⁹ Weeks expressed racial attitudes which we recognize as having been common among Southern Californians, but with the notable exception of the communists, racism was no less prominent within progressive and radical left social and political organizations.³⁰

By the twentieth century romantic literature and the kind of works that Bourne had called sociologic fiction were both influencing the new pseudo-scientific expertise of marketing; this is reflected in the literary character of booster pamphlets and Southland histories written by the Los

²⁷ It is interesting to note that the compiled 1891 volume III of *Arena* magazine includes both an article from professor N.S. Shaler, called “The Nature of the Negro,” which asserts the heritable and deterministic racial inferiority of African Americans, and an article, “A New Declaration of Rights,” written by the novelist (and Henry George follower) Hamlin Garland, who asserts that among the people of the Single Tax Movement, “We draw no line of color, creed, or sex. We mean *all* men.” See B. O. Flower, ed., *The Arena* (Boston: The Arena Publishing Company, 1891), 161. There is no real evidence that the Single Tax Movement typically advocated in favor of equal rights for African Americans – in fact among the followers of Henry George were many populists who were as racist as any other group (see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage, 1960) , but Garland’s assertion is important in that it exposes the tremendous variations in ideologies that individuals brought into social, political, and economic movements.

²⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, “Colored California,” *The Crisis*, August 1913, 193.

²⁹ See Thomas Dixon, *Comrades; a Story of Social Adventure in California* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909).

³⁰ See Judith Raftery, “Los Angeles Clubwomen and Progressive Reform,” in *Progressivism Revisited*, ed. by William Deverell, 145.

Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Classical allusions, perhaps recalling the earliest literature of utopia, such as “Athens-on-the-Hill,” or upper class imagery like “Oxford Square,” and “Harvard-Wilshire Heights,” dominated the naming conventions for new Los Angeles area developments. In this sense, it is possible to consider the booster literature that was developed to sell these communities to the right kind of people as a hybrid space of cultural production resulting in an intersection of moral and commercial promotion.

Neither were the literary dimensions of real estate development confined to brochures. If the written word could promote land, it was also the case that land could promote the written word. There is perhaps no more emblematic example of the material conflation of books, real estate, and commoditization than the 1914 episode of the “Encyclopedia lots.” The slow-selling land of Huntington Beach was acquired from Henry Huntington and a group of investors by an Encyclopedia Americana sales agent who subsequently offered 25 x 100 ft lots as free premiums when customers bought a full set of encyclopedias.³¹ According to a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, “a lively business in encyclopedias is reported to have been done in the states lying between Ohio and Utah, when it became known that the oily-tongued book agents were giving away Coney Island homesites with each purchase amounting to \$125.” Ironically, none of the lots seem to have been sold in California – so no Huntington Beach residents gained an economic advantage from the oil strikes in this area, at least initially.³²

Imagine fulfilling the dream of land (and home) ownership and high culture in one consumer purchase. Unfortunately, most of the book-purchasers failed to keep up with the tax payments on their “free” land (many because they had been told that their lots were by the ocean, and when they discovered they owned land about a mile from the sea, believed it was worthless),

³¹ Jules Tygiel, *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal during the Roaring Twenties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 16.

³² “Gave Oil Fields as Premiums – Book Agent Led Many to Fortune,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1923.

so they no longer owned it in 1920 when oil was discovered. But for those who had invested in education and kept their land, monthly royalties (about \$60/month) or real estate profit were the legacies of becoming part of this new community of oil.³³

Both Reliance Oil and Globe Petroleum profited from leasing Encyclopedia Lots, but even without leaseholds, private ownership of oil-producing land was not necessarily an insurmountable problem for oil companies, as noted in a 1937 law suit against the Standard Oil Company. This court action “told the story of the Standard Oil Company’s slant drilling at Huntington Beach.” It seems Standard Oil had leased a great deal of land from Huntington’s former company, the Pacific Electric Railway, and had “put down a large number of wells, all of which, as they went down into mother earth, naturally drifted out to sea.” The story notes that Standard Oil “claimed to be innocent of any intention of stealing the people’s oil but, just the same, the business end of six of their wells admittedly fetched up in the people’s oil pool under the sea.” “They have been pumping away for years,” the lawsuit claimed, “and are still pumping.”³⁴ In the final analysis, free land for books did not make a lot of consumers wealthy; hopefully, at least, it made a few of them smarter.

Subdividing land in order to target sales to out-of-state prospects who could not inspect the territory was not perceived to be a problem in the Southland until the 1960s when scholarly critiques began to demonstrate the detrimental effect on land use this practice had enabled. A paper prepared for the National Conference on Land Sales, in fact, characterized such selling techniques as a significant problem, noting that “these parcels are then offered through a variety of means – salesmen, direct sales advertising, advertising in nationally circulated magazines,

³³Howard Kegley, “Aladdin of the Oil Wells – Arabian Nights Tales of Fortunes Made in Petroleum,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1929.

³⁴ Article, “Slanting Oil Wells,” *EPIC News*, Vol. 4, No. 13, August 23, 1937, 5, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

television, and variations on the ‘old free lot’ technique – to individual buyers.”³⁵ Lots in these subdivisions were known as remote, or “unanchored,” and land was usually located on the fringes of cities that were in active phases of rapid urban expansion. The problem that 1960s public policy advocates were focused on went beyond the misleading selling techniques that had been practiced since at least the 1880s; unanchored or remote subdivisions were being sold on the installment plan, and it was this financing mechanism, along with a system of taxation that tended to overburden early individual purchasers in these “premature” subdivisions that often led, according to one study’s author, to “blighted vacant urban land.”³⁶ Blight had been avoided in Huntington Beach’s Encyclopedia Lots because oil was discovered (six years after subdivision), but other areas, and particularly those in more remote former agricultural or high-desert regions (such as Llano del Rio’s Antelope Valley location), would not fare as well. Planning, in these cases, was active and intricate, but it promoted fictive rather than practical community development.

Developing a relationship between product/service consumption and a good life was even more compelling in the late nineteenth century because Bellamy’s utopianism overcame the fear people had about being overwhelmed by new technology during this period of rapid industrialization. *Looking Backward* struck such a popular cord because it revealed a perspective demonstrating that machines could be harnessed to drive democracy. So, the notions that were popularized as Bellamy’s “inventions,” and later “predictions,” like high speed transport, product-delivery through pneumatic tubes, credit cards, radio channel broadcasting, and electronic stereo systems, were much more than literary novelties. They were comforting

³⁵ Claude E. Elias, *The Unanchored Subdivision: A Preliminary Study of Development Practices and Their Impact on Investors* (Los Angeles: Real Estate Research Program, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of California, Los Angeles, 1962), 1.

³⁶ Elias, 8.

examples of machines creating a good life. A proper, classless, application of technology could result in a society where, instead of becoming machines like Sherwood Anderson's farm workers, or worse yet being consumed by machines, people could consume them – equally and without bias as to station in life or geographic location.

Bellamy's theme of consumer-equality was later taken up by one of his self-identified followers, Bradford Peck, who wrote *The World a Department Store* in 1900.³⁷ Like many wealthy socialists who embraced reform after reading Bellamy's novel, Peck was a successful businessman, having built Maine's largest department store before turning his attention to the workers' cooperative movement following the depression of 1893. Peck's novel, in fact, was a copy of *Looking Backward*, employing the motif of a "sleeper" protagonist who awakens in a future America to illuminate the difference between the nineteenth century and the socialist present. Peck built on Bellamy's consumer outline, characterizing all aspects of modern society as "departments" configured to allow individual choice, preference, and comfort for everyone. Los Angeles, because of its geographic sprawl, which facilitated satellite shopping areas instead of a single shopping hub, was uniquely positioned to offer a model of Bellamy's equality and Peck's departmentalized freedom of choice.

I imagine that Angelenos might have preferred a Peck home to a Bellamy one, for housing in Peck's utopia was more a matter of aesthetic consistency than uniformity. "Any one desiring to procure a house of his own," in Bradford Peck's future world, "by application to the

³⁷ Bradford Peck, who was from Maine, and the utopian socialist and razor blade baron King Camp Gillette from Wisconsin (though he did move to Southern California in the early 1920s) demonstrate that Los Angeles' famed "millionaire socialism" was not an anomalous phenomenon. In fact, the three-pronged characteristics of wealth, literary effort (Gillette was also a novelist), and socialism were not uncommon. What is more exceptional is that Angelenos seemed less bothered by the apparent inconsistencies inherent in individual wealth and socialism. If the politics of people like Peck, Gillette, and Wilshire were not taken very seriously in other places, in Los Angeles their ideas seemed acceptable and even appropriate in the public sphere. I attribute this to the perception that the Southland was "open space." It was not only construction, but the ideas that contoured construction, that were less constrained by rigid boundaries in the Southland.

real estate department and board of architects can select a location, and such a house will be erected as his station in life and means allow.”³⁸ This idea differed from Bellamy’s utopia, where housing was encouraged to be uniform and classless; Peck was clearly trying to retain more individualism and allowed for variations in the level of investment home buyers could make. But like Bellamy, Peck’s houses all had to be designed in the same architectural style. Again, the major social factor utopia seems to struggle through is the degree of homogeneity required to sustain a conflict-free world.

Like Peck’s fictional society, Southern California utopianism always involved a degree of negotiating between individualism and cooperation that was unparalleled elsewhere; not only in style, but substance as well. Even dyed-in-the-wool socialist Job Harriman, defeated as Los Angeles’ mayoral candidate in 1911 and 1913, failed in his communal utopian colony by 1918, tried again to resurrect a Southern California utopia in 1920 by appealing to the need for individualism on his planned Lake Elsinore cotton-commune. While Harriman only wanted colonists devoted to the ideal of cooperation, his promotional literature insisted that “for those wishing to farm individually, there will be good agricultural land offered for sale.”³⁹ This was a compromise several cooperative projects were attempting in the 1920s – Charles Weeks would try a similar recruitment (sales) strategy on his cooperative poultry colony within only a few years; in neither case did the concession to individualism – even in a territory that was used to inventing its own definitions of land and self – make any contribution to the success of the colony.⁴⁰

³⁸ Bradford Peck, *The World a Department Store* (Lewiston, ME: Bradford Peck, 1900), 50.

³⁹ “Job Harriman in New Utopia,” *Los Angeles Times*, Part II, October 14, 1920.

⁴⁰ Harriman’s and Weeks’ efforts to allow individual enterprise in cooperative colonies can be compared to the compromise that Lenin implemented under the New Economic Policy (NEP) in Soviet Russia, where peasants on agricultural communes (prior to the forced collectivization of 1939) were allowed to own and farm small individual agricultural plots, and a nascent class of merchants, “Nepmen,” was permitted to operate.

While we will see that for Charles Weeks and Job Harriman individualism and cooperation were only available to Anglos, it is tempting to wonder if Bradford Peck also meant only Caucasians when he referred to “any one desiring to procure a house,” or if his idea of the future was more racially inclusive. Like Bellamy, he was silent about race, the only mention of which was that in the future the state would manufacture every imaginable type of clothing, which in the past had been the purview of a “race distinguished for their persistent nature.”⁴¹ Whether he was alluding to the Jewish majority in New York’s nineteenth-century garment industry or merely turning a colorful phrase about garment sellers is uncertain. In either case, his future society rehabilitated this “race” by providing its members with executive jobs in the imaginary giant clothing cooperative of the future.

It is also important that neither Peck nor Bellamy focused primarily on agricultural production, even though they were both rehabilitating small town and country lifeways. This was not Jeffersonian America, but, rather, a modern integrated (e.g. manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale, retail, service, professional) economy. The futurists who followed Bellamy were devoted to bringing utopian dimensions from the countryside into the city, and vice versa, but their vision for social infrastructure was modern, technological, and progressive.

One important novel that often is examined by scholars who explore the literary roots of California, and which does address racial issues, is Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*. Almost since the very year the novel was published, Jackson’s descriptions of *Californio* and Mission Indian pasts have had an impact on the Southland’s built-landscape, and the 1920s aesthetic of the area’s Spanish colonial architecture certainly owed its popularity to the fanciful settings in *Ramona*.⁴² The region’s myriad Ramona festivals and real world Ramona sites copied from

⁴¹ Peck, 85.

⁴² Roberto Ramón Lint Sagarena, 77.

fictional places are testaments to the influence of the novel. But *Ramona* never energized an Indian Rights Movement the way Helen Hunt Jackson would have liked – in fact, Jackson died only a year after the publication of *Ramona*, and considered her work to have been a failure.

Ramona scholar and geographer Dydia DeLyser has posited that there were, in fact, specific literary formulations in Helen Hunt Jackson's novel that detracted from the political message she wanted to convey. Most importantly, DeLyser asserts that the rise of regional fiction, a genre into which *Ramona* comfortably fits, functioned to stimulate interest in recovering pre-industrial pasts.⁴³ Industrial anxiety, of course, is the same emotion utopian novels tapped into during this era, and I would argue that geographic mythmaking drew from *Ramona* and *Looking Backward* in the same way – past, present, and future combined to establish new ground rules for the way home-places were to be imagined in the Los Angeles area.

Even as early as 1883, while Jackson immersed herself in the Native American uplift movement, she seemed to be nurturing this idea by adding her voice to the cacophony of Los Angeles mythmaking when she wrote a short story published in *Century Magazine* called “Echoes in the City of Angeles.” Her story purported to narrate the origins of Spanish Los Angeles, though she began this work by proclaiming that “the tale of the founding of the city of Los Angeles is a tale for verse rather than for prose.” “It reads,” Jackson maintained, “like a page out of some new ‘Earthly Paradise,’ and would fit well into songs such as William Morris has sung.”^{44 45}

⁴³ Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 17-25.

⁴⁴ Helen Hunt Jackson, “Echoes in the City of Angeles,” *Century Magazine* XVIII, 1883, Don Meadows Papers, MS-R1, Box 65, Folder 19, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

⁴⁵ Jackson died in 1885, before *Looking Backward* was published, but it is striking that she invokes William Morris as a suitable bard for Los Angeles, because Morris wrote an important literary response (*News from Nowhere*) to Bellamy's work that countered Nationalist ideas about utopia. Morris and Bellamy represent two opposing visions

The Arcadian utopia of William Morris would later become an apt allusion for Jackson to have promoted so presciently, (for he had not yet written *News From Nowhere*), and it revealed precisely the problem with Jackson's message about Indian mistreatment. The Arcadian nostalgia overwhelmed the plot and characters, who were racially complex and lived within rigidly stratified social and class hierarchies that were not legible to late-nineteenth century Angelenos. Anglos, and *Californios* for that matter (as illuminated in the novels of Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton), had already erased mixed-race heritage. They had re-imagined an Anglo past, and Jackson's *Ramona* scenery provided a Southern California map that could be used to bring this imagined past into the present by resurrecting historic, idyllic, places. *Ramona* fit the range of emerging booster myths and brochures promoting the Eden of Los Angeles like a newly found piece of a puzzle. In fact, literary scholar David Fine contends that the entire "mythic construct" of Los Angeles "owes its genesis, essentially to a single writer, Helen Hunt Jackson, and to one novel, *Ramona* (1884)."⁴⁶ I argue that Los Angeles myth is much more complex than this, but Helen Hunt Jackson did play her part.

While Jackson did write into existence a cast of mixed race, Indian, and Mexican residents who eventually overcame social problems to live in a serene *Californio*-inspired world in Mexico City, none of Bellamy's novels, speeches, or published essays ever presented such a complex racial palette. In fact, they all were nearly entirely silent about race. Deafness to the social issue of race is implicit in this silence, and it would have been typical for someone of Bellamy's background. Still, it is remarkable that a man who was so moved by the injustice of

of utopia: one that perceives technology and urbanization as tools that can be leveraged to achieve rational progress and the other (Morris') that valorizes a return to nature and a rejection of industrialization's technological mechanization. H.H., in her efforts to resurrect the nobility of Native American society, leans toward Morris, though her aesthetic visions were to form the basis of an amalgam of past and future in modern progressive-era and Jazz age Los Angeles.

⁴⁶David Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles: A City in Fiction* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 30.

the Haymarket uprisings and who sought to design and advocate a more cooperative and egalitarian American future would so completely ignore the inequality of race – arguably the most visible struggle of the post-Reconstruction nineteenth century.

There undoubtedly is the assumption of Anglo hegemony in Bellamy's vision of a future America. He is too genteel to argue Thomas Dixon's position that African Americans have no place in America's future – but, in fact, they had no place in his literary version of America's future. He seems to have assumed that they had disappeared, or at least that race was no longer a socially important issue.⁴⁷ As we will see, this is not inconsistent with the racial attitudes of many radicals during the era.

Bellamy's ideas about race, though they may have been similar to Dixon's in terms of valorizing whiteness, might offer a prediction that there could be a post-racial future; that racial characteristics could change in conjunction with an evolutionary move toward an ideal society. Though there is no record that he articulated this point of view with regard to African Americans, there is some evidence that he saw racial differences as environmentally constructed and, hence, adaptable.⁴⁸

We may be able to gain some insight from an unpublished essay Bellamy wrote sometime in the 1870s about the history of the "Gypsies" (Roma), the people against whom European racial discrimination may have been most consistently and universally applied. Without drawing parallels between the social relations of Roma and African Americans, it is the method rather than the subject of Bellamy's analysis that may demonstrate a more nuanced

⁴⁷While I know of no personal connection between the two men, as cited earlier in this study, Thomas Dixon did write several letters to the editor of Bellamy's publication *The New Nation* in the 1890s, in which he professed support for "a new social order," presumably in line with Bellamy's idea of Nationalism. Unpublished letter from Thomas Dixon, Jr. to editor of the *New Nation*, October 20, 1892, Hou B MS Am 1181 box 2 (173-319), Edward Bellamy Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁴⁸In this sense, Lamarckian theories of evolution, which contend that acquired characteristics are heritable, offer a less deterministic view of racial difference than does the popular interpretation of Darwin or Wallace's theories.

perception of race than we normally attribute to him. Bellamy would have been in his early twenties – out of college and possibly writing for magazine publication, although this essay does not appear ever to have been in print.

Bellamy cites Blumenbach and follows new scholarly ideas about race, ethnography, and anthropology. He considers the Gypsies to be a race whose characteristics have at least some heritability, noting “the purity of their savage stock, and although separated so widely, their various clans are one in all national peculiarities.”⁴⁹ Foreshadowing his near erasure of African Americans in *Looking Backward*, Bellamy contends that “despite this spirit of intense nationality, the gypsies have positively no traditions, nor do they possess the least knowledge of their own origins or history. They are a predatory people, looking upon all other human beings as their appointed game and means of support, to be robbed, beguiled, cheated, and turned to profit, as we regard the patient earth, and the animal creation.”⁵⁰ Yet in spite of Bellamy’s harsh judgment about the contemporary condition of the Gypsy “race,” he concluded that “there is reason to think that even this stubborn tribe is gradually loosening its hold on barbarism, and yielding to the current of civilized life which surrounds it.”⁵¹ Bellamy may have believed that racial uplift could be attained by improving environment. Of course, what we might imagine to be Bellamy’s intent with respect to a racial or post-racial future would become much less important than how his followers actually would engage with (or ignore) the “race problem” over the next several decades.

Even before anthropologists, ethnologists, and the emerging profession of sociologists fully understood the implications of the new Darwin-Wallace concepts about the evolution of

⁴⁹ Edward Bellamy, unpublished essay “The Gypsies,” New York, 187?, bMS Am 1181.4 (box 1), Edward Bellamy Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston, MA.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*

species, ideas about heritability and adaptation were becoming popular in everyday explanations about the relationship between what people believed were racial characteristics and environment. Paradoxically, Darwinism readily lent itself as scientific support to equal rights reformers, racists, laissez-faire capitalists, and socialists.⁵² Indeed, “Darwin himself,” according to historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, “in spite of his aversion to slavery, was not averse to the idea that some races were more fit than others, and that this fitness was demonstrated in human history.”⁵³ Darwinism, particularly meaningful to social reformers, was on the verge of inadvertently complicating the modern understanding of race science.

Yet Darwin himself was not always consistent in explaining the nature of heritability, sometimes concluding – especially in his theory of sexual selection – that traits acquired by adapting to one’s environment could be passed on to descendants. This Lamarckian idea of heredity was attractive to social reformers who believed that “as mankind adapted itself to the changing conditions of life, a new human nature would develop.”⁵⁴ The outcome of such adaptation eventually would be better individuals, and after that, a better human race.

Bellamy seemed to be reflecting this idea when he wrote about the Roma, and his concepts about African Americans may have been informed by the same principles. The absence of racial diversity in the year 2000 may be an indication, not that African Americans were segregated out of a future civilization, but that to Bellamy race would cease to be a human issue. Such a theory about place – about human and environmental adaptation – is evidenced in the period’s booster narratives about Los Angeles being the inevitable outcome of western progress. Bellamyism may have been popular and influential in California because it so easily could be superimposed on the pre-existing place-narratives; like the popular adaptation of Helen Hunt

⁵² Himmelfarb, 415-425.

⁵³ *ibid.*, 416.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 420.

Jackson's message, readers could accept or reject Bellamy's politics and still find in *Looking Backward* a useful vision of their own preferred future.

But if Bellamy seemed to value racial homogeneity, Helen Hunt Jackson challenged this paradigm in her popular writing. *Ramona* valorizes a diverse Southern California setting where *mestizos*, Mexicans, and Indians coexist with the area's White population. Jackson, who, along with future Los Angeles real estate developer Abbot Kinney, had been an Indian agent, wanted to see America redress the injustices suffered by the country's first peoples. With the publication of *Ramona*, Jackson had hoped to write another *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – inciting political action on behalf of Native Americans. Unfortunately, Jackson's readers were able to separate her political advocacy from her aesthetic imagination, and accepted only her rehabilitation of a mythical Spanish past, not her ideas about Indian equality.

The public reception to Jackson's social message seems to contrast sharply with the way that Bellamy's politics were embraced, though how closely readers actually followed even Bellamy's politics is also questionable. Still, there is little question that readers were more easily able to accept the symbolism in Bellamy's narrative because, though it advocated change to the social order, it never sought to overthrow white supremacy. Jackson, on the other hand, used literature "to indict the treachery of the whites and their government," as one scholar has maintained, in spite of the fact that her readers largely rejected this message and were more "captivated by beautiful and dramatic descriptions of the softer, more colorful Mediterranean civilization that stemmed from colonial Spain" than they were the plight of California's Indians.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Andrew F. Rolle, introduction to Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: The Early Crusade for Indian Reform*, 1881 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), xix.

Indeed, when Jackson said she had hoped to write the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for Native Americans, she meant that she hoped her social message would do for Native Americans what many believed Harriett Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had done for African Americans. Unfortunately, while a *Ramona* imaginary still permeates the public aesthetics and amusements that dominate Southern California, Jackson's notions of social equality do not. In fact, the resurgence of "Ramonaism" that occurred with the inception of Southland festivals and a revival of Spanish Colonial architecture in 1923 directly coincided with an increase in the intensity of residential exclusion and restrictive real estate covenants. In California, as in other American places, white supremacy was undoubtedly driven by both racial and economic principles, but Southern Californians' belief that they actually were building utopia inscribed racism on the physical landscape in a somewhat different way.

Zoning may have been a Los Angeles innovation, but residential restrictions were not new. In New York's Tuxedo Park even before this period (1880) builders began to experiment with gated communities. "The first step," one urban planning scholar notes, "in creating this private world, is controlling access to it. From the beginning, the suburbs have intended to separate their residents, first from the city, and even later from each other."⁵⁶ Los Angeles suburbs were in fact not designed to separate from the city, instead negotiating an imaginary interconnection with urbanism, but they were designed to maintain a utopian illusion of racial homogeneity through racial separation. This was always rationalized as protecting real estate value, for value was based on desirability (demand), which, in turn, was based on peacefulness. The very existence of utopia was based on the concept that human conflict had been eliminated, and this required racial sameness. Still, like Los Angeles itself, utopia was never a static place. It could be re-imagined and reconstructed, and it often was, since it was so extremely useful to

⁵⁶ Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, 8.

such a wide range of Southland interest groups and social movements. Edward Bellamy's utopian concepts would prove to be remarkably plastic as sources of inspiration and information for many of these new groups.

While the golden age of Bellamyism began to fade when Nationalists lost political leverage after the election of 1896, the influence of *Looking Backward* did not simply evaporate. In many ways it always existed as sub-text, influencing mainstream architecture, educational institutions, labor and employment practices, but, at least through the mid-twentieth century, it also explicitly re-emerged in Southern California within political, social, and even spiritual movements that attracted substantial followings in the mainstream and on the margins of society.

One of the most recent, yet most understudied, episodes of any variant of Bellamyism was first brought to light by the Los Angeles writer and activist Carey McWilliams in his foundational commentary on Los Angeles, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (1946). Mankind United, in the end more of a cult than a political movement, first entered the scene in Northern California in 1934, but according to the sociologist who studied it most thoroughly, reached its apex in the Los Angeles area, "where ultimately it became more widespread than it was in the northern part of the Pacific Coast Division," as its western organization was called.⁵⁷

Arthur L. Bell, the founder of Mankind United, published a manifesto for his movement and actively recruited members to participate in a scheme intended to reform society or, more specifically, to rescue it from the "Hidden Rulers" whom Bell "discovered" were responsible for wars, poverty, and social inequality. To organize this effort, Bell formed what he called the Universal Service Corporation and proposed an economic and marketing plan that would bring two-hundred million members (worldwide) into the company, at which point it would have

⁵⁷ H. T. Dohrman, *California Cult: The Story of Mankind United* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 31.

amassed enough capital and property to control decision-making for the corporations that dominated the worldwide means of production.

All of Bell's ideas, according to the single scholarly study of Mankind United, "had been outlined in the two books, *Looking Backward* and *Equality*, written by Edward Bellamy almost a half-century before."⁵⁸ But Bell was a more outgoing organizer than Bellamy, and "Mankind United went further [than *Looking Backward*] by devising a concrete version of utopia" to crystallize its vision of the future.⁵⁹ Still, Mankind United might not demand or deserve anything more than a footnote in the story of building a utopian Los Angeles, except that as many as two-hundred and fifty thousand Westerners, mostly from Southern California, ultimately either joined or expressed serious interest in following this movement.⁶⁰

Nor were Mankind United's members concentrated among the Depression-era's dispossessed. Many, in fact, owned substantial Southland real estate, much of which was donated to Bell's Universal Service Corporation⁶¹ or its affiliated church, Christ's Church of the Golden Rule. By 1945, in California and Oregon, the corporation owned at least \$3.5 million of commercial and residential real estate,⁶² including The Continental Building (the tallest office building in Los Angeles, at Fourth and Spring); the Homesteaders Office Building, Los Angeles; the Stratford Hotel, Los Angeles; the Santa Monica Athletic Club, Santa Monica; the prestigious Wavecrest Beach Club, Santa Monica; the Sorrento Beach Club, Santa Monica; an egg farm in

⁵⁸ Dohrman, *California Cult*, 27.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Mankind United, in its final incarnation, called Christ's Church of the Golden Rule, filed for bankruptcy in California in 1946 and membership estimates were made by the State Attorney General. Order to Show Cause, Christ's Church, Bankrupt transcript (July 16, 1946), cited in Dohrman, *California Cults*, 32. California's population according to the 1940 Census was just in excess of 6 million people, so Mankind United affiliation would have been similar to a 1.5 million member movement in 2010 California. U.S. Department of Census, accessed at static URL <https://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/california.pdf>.

⁶¹ There is clearly an echo of King Camp Gillette's *World Corporation* in Bell's construction, though he never attributes any influence to Gillette – only Bellamy.

⁶² About \$46 million in 2015 dollars, but this, of course, underestimates the dramatic increase in the value of California real estate since then. Mankind United unquestionably controlled a substantial real estate empire.

Pomona, ranches in Imperial Valley and San Bernardino County, hotels, machine shops, several large mansions in Hollywood, houses and lots scattered throughout Los Angeles county, and valuable property in downtown Los Angeles.⁶³ Real estate and utopia seemed to be natural companions; conflating the vision of ideal life with its physical manifestation in property is one aspect of thought and action shared by turn-of-the-century Nationalists and mid-century Mankind United followers.

Bell and Bellamy also shared a technological vision for the future, and in both cases the main benefit of innovation was going to be consumer comfort. Where Bellamy hypothesized twenty-four hour music available in every household room, Bell imagined that “each home will also be supplied with automatic vocal type correspondence equipment, which will enable its user to merely press a button and talk as he would into a Dictaphone, but in addition to a record of the exact intonations and inflections of his voice, he will have an automatically prepared and typewritten letter – with as many duplicate copies as he may desire – silently released into the correspondence basket on his desk, either ready for his signature, or already automatically signed, yet without any human being having operated the typewriter or personally prepared his letter through any mechanical means requiring human labor.”⁶⁴ Though clearly modeled from Bellamy’s inventions, an important contrast is that Bell’s automated letter writing and mailing machine used technology to reduce the burdens of service work (and, especially in Los Angeles, the service economy was much more significant than in Bellamy’s day), while Bellamy’s machine democratized access to leisure.

⁶³ Arthur Young & Co., Auditors’ Report for Christ Church Bankrupt hearing, June 28, 1946), in Dohrman, 51.

⁶⁴ No Author listed, but attributed to Arthur Bell (copyright under a pseudonym), *Mankind united : a challenge to "mad ambition" and "the money changers" accompanied by an invitation to the world's "sane" men and women* (Oakland: International Registration Bureau, Pacific Coast Division of North America, 1938), 126.

Though each of these technologies offered solutions to different problems, they both demonstrated a common foresight; one that would transform society in the late twentieth century more than either author could have imagined during the late nineteenth. Like Bellamy, Arthur Bell saw information technology – communication – as the key for workers to achieve equality with the elite, and, in addition to his dictating machine, many more of his futuristic technology inventions focused on creating tools that democratized knowledge (including television). Bellamy invented information systems that improved consumption (and, by extension, leisure), like universally available product-information and distribution, while Bell reduced the burden of work, thereby freeing more time for leisure. Both strategies continued to resonate in the promotional messaging of twentieth-century developers – whether they were building homes, businesses, or utopian colonies.

That Bell was drawing from Bellamy was explicitly revealed when he granted an interview in 1947 to the sociologist chronicling the story of Mankind United. After coming to what he believed was the truth through Christian Science, according to his interviewer, Bell said that he read *Looking Backward* and its sequel, *Equality*. “Christian Science,” Bell decided, “was all right, but it failed to go far enough: it adapted itself too complacently to our oppressive system. Bellamy had the right idea.”⁶⁵ But while Bellamy’s Nationalist movement gradually lost momentum during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Bell’s movement ended more abruptly and ignominiously: first, the organization’s leaders were convicted (later overturned) of sedition under the Wartime Sedition Act in May of 1943, then Christ’s Church of the Golden Rule filed for bankruptcy protection in 1945. Finally, those few followers remaining in the organization descended into an apocalyptic vision “convinced that doomsday was almost here”

⁶⁵ H.T. Dohrman, personal interview with Arthur Bell, April 26, 1947, in Dohrman, *California Cult*, 81.

and that “humanity had not advanced far enough to avert the catastrophe that was about to explode in its face.”⁶⁶

During its decade-long existence, however, Mankind United had built a mass movement in Southern California by articulating a social vision that promised a better home (e.g., information technologies, television, automatic air-conditioning, landscaped gardens, fruit trees) and a “guarantee of financial independence and security.”⁶⁷ Such passages played to the same consumer instincts that had responded to Edward Bellamy’s culture of consumption fifty years earlier. But that so many Southern California residents may have been naïve enough to believe Bell’s fictional “Research Department” when it claimed to have invented “fully tested and perfected” technologies that were “capable of providing every family on earth, within this same 10 year period – not with just a temporary shelter against the elements but with a home, the value of which, together with its immediate grounds and furnishing, will exceed a present-day cost of twenty-five thousand dollars,” is much less important than understanding why this message might have resonated in 1937, when the New Deal was proposing a new dimension of government-private sector cooperation.⁶⁸

I contend that the great popularity of Bellamyism in the late nineteenth century had not emerged because times were so desperate that people could see no other way to improve their conditions (in fact, such a perception might have led to a more revolutionary movement, which Bellamyism was most assuredly not); rather, it was because people felt hopeful about their ability to bring an imaginary future into the present day world. Reliance on the book, which had only recently become affordable and widely available, as a mechanism to communicate this

⁶⁶ Dohrman, 132.

⁶⁷ Bell, *Mankind United*, 127 and 193.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 125-126.

hopeful vision helped achieve this “annihilation of time and space.”⁶⁹ Bell-ism – Mankind United – though it may have originated in a very different and less entertaining type of fiction, struck the same cords, imagined the same changes, and was based on a positive belief that individual and collective actions could make a difference in the world. Both of these movements used literature to resolve challenges that readers found in material life.

Like Mankind United, other movements flourished in Southern California during the Depression that would retrospectively claim a connection to Bellamyism. The Utopian Society of America was one such organization, and its close alignment with Upton Sinclair’s EPIC movement (though the group always claimed political neutrality) placed it in the mainstream of activism with respect to electoral politics and social reform. The Society, headquartered in Los Angeles, was formed September 20, 1933 and, according to many scholars, took *Looking Backward* as its blueprint for the model society that would replace the failing capitalism that had so obviously run its course. This contention is derived almost exclusively from an idealized pamphlet by Newton Van Dalsem called *History of the Utopian Society of America*, where he bluntly proclaimed that “the philosophy of Edward Bellamy and that of the Utopian Society of America are identical.”⁷⁰ While the Utopian Society had many values in common with Bellamy and occasionally promoted the idea of a connection between the two movements, this Depression-era movement was much more than a mimeographed copy of Edward Bellamy’s principles.

Like many social or political movements of the twentieth century, the Utopian Society certainly shared common ground with Bellamy, but in many ways the Society was more situated in its own contemporary political issues, and if the Society were invoking any great leader it was

⁶⁹ Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 4.

⁷⁰ Newton Van Dalsem, *History of the Utopian Society of America: An Authentic Account of its Origin and Development up to 1942* (Los Angeles: Newton Van Dalsem, 1942), 9.

not Edward Bellamy but Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In fact, in its original statement of principles, even before asserting that “We place no bars against race, color or creed [and] Republicans, Democrats, Socialists and Independents sit side by side at our council table,” the Utopian Society announced that “President Roosevelt is not backing us. We are backing him.”⁷¹ Utopians conceived of the New Deal as a non-violent path toward Utopia.

Van Dalsem’s historical account of the Utopian Society was sponsored by The Association of Liberal Freemasons of Los Angeles, which, in 1939 presented and published a lecture on “Edward Bellamy and His Works.” The late nineteenth-century movement that developed Bellamy (Nationalist) clubs was always popular with Freemasons and Theosophists; that the historian of yet another semi-secret society might find connections to Bellamy’s vision of a better world is not at all surprising. This, combined with a renewed interest in Bellamyism that had been stimulated by Bellamy’s widow and daughter lecturing in 1930s’ Los Angeles about his life, may account for the recollection of a stronger connection than is apparent in written records.

Like Mankind United, but unlike Bellamy himself, the Utopian Society distinguished itself from other progressive groups by explicitly declaring that the organization was open to people of all races, creeds, religions, and colors. This was an important development, and is especially notable because it was not inevitable given the group’s pedigree and peers; many of Bellamy’s Los Angeles followers had become active in the eugenics movement, and even Upton Sinclair’s political party (and Sinclair’s own muckraking exposés) completely ignored the race “issue.” This was not the case in the Utopian Society, and, though its editorial pages were as silent about race as EPIC’s, it frequently carried articles like the one in 1934 noting that “nearly a hundred members of the colored race in Los Angeles are now in active training for the purpose

⁷¹*Utopian News*, Vol. 1 No. 1 June 23, 1934, published by The National Foundation of the Utopian Society.

of enacting the rituals of the Utopian Cycles.” The reporter concluded that “something of the fervor of the Negro spirituals is expected when their melodious voices carry the message of the Utopian ideal.”⁷² If the patronizing tenor of the Utopians’ bragging about African American membership shows an inadequate consciousness with respect to the race issue, it nevertheless is an order of magnitude beyond the level of inclusiveness that almost any other progressive political or social group was willing to demonstrate at the time.

As historian Douglas Flamming has remarked, the Utopian Society was a difficult group to describe.⁷³ It was politically active, though it claimed no specific political creed and even denied political involvement, at times; it sometimes argued using leftwing revolutionary rhetoric, though it professed completely non-violent change; it was part secret society, complete with “six cycles” of customized “theatrical” rituals and coded names for its members, though it frequently advertised public picnics, speeches, and published editorials where authors signed their names. Importantly, it was publicly devoted to racial equality and one of its founders and main activists was an African-American Angeleno, though not many of its members were. The Utopians were closely aligned with Sinclair’s EPIC and shared his devotion to “production for use” colonies, though they do not seem ever to have started any that were notable. Many Society members, however, appeared to be much more driven in a spiritual direction (and, in fact, after the Society’s demise, some ex-Utopians reformed a movement under the leadership of Father Divine).⁷⁴ There were connections between Bellamyism and the Utopians, to be sure, but it is

⁷² Article, “Colored Group to Enact Cycles,” *Utopian News*, 1934, Box 4, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

⁷³ Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 304.

⁷⁴ It is possible that another reason for Van Dalsem’s insistence on a connection with Bellamyism is that he was attempting to resurrect a practical social vision at a time (1942) when most of the Utopian Society remnant was following Father Divine toward a religious “utopia.”

doubtful that the Utopians truly relied on *Looking Backward* for doctrine or even an articulation of principles.

For almost a year after their own independent newspaper folded, the Utopians were allocated half a page in the *EPIC News* (One issue was even renamed *Upton Sinclair's EPIC News and Utopian News*), and in 1936 an editor, who called him or herself "18x3820," attempted to define the Utopian creed, claiming that "Utopia to us members of the Utopian Society, means, 'the applying of practical methods to attain a very practical objective,'" it means second, 'a clear sighted aim for a definite improvement in the mode of living for everyone.'" Since this might not have been precise enough for EPIC readers, the editor continued, "It means third, a peaceful revision of some of our laws to bring peace and security of living to all of the United States. It does not mean a change of one group of rulers by exploit to another group of the same caliber, which historically was performed by strife and violence." Probably because some of the Society's earlier editorials did have a tendency toward what Judith Butler calls "excitable speech," the editor bluntly confirmed that the Utopian creed "therefore, does not mean the teaching of bloody revolution. It means the use of ballots and billets instead of the use of bullets. It does not mean to kill off the capitalists in order to do away with the evils of the so-called 'Capitalist System,' but to enlighten all of the people, to eliminate as much as possible most of the evils now existing."⁷⁵ The principle of gradual evolution out of capitalism would have been very much in tune with Bellamy's own perspective, even if it did not originate specifically with his thoughts.

⁷⁵Article, 18x3820, "Utopia," Utopian News section, *EPIC News*, Vol. 3, No. 20, October 12, 1936, 5, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

Edward Bellamy's widow and daughter (40 years after his death) did seem to recognize at least an ideological kinship between the Utopian Society and *Looking Backward*. This is illustrated when the Los Angeles Society hosted an appearance by Emma and Marion Bellamy in November of 1936. Advertising the talk that the women would give, the Utopian spokesperson contends that *Looking Backward* and *Equality* "have done more to stir mankind to thinking and hoping for a better and saner social order than probably any other two books in the history of man."⁷⁶ The non-Utopian pages of the EPIC News also announce the same speaking circuit that the Bellamys were traveling, merely noting that "Emma and Marion Bellamy, widow and daughter respectively of the late Edward Bellamy, author of the famous novel, "Looking Backward," [sic] will speak at the Center of the Jewish Socialist Verband."⁷⁷ No reflection on Bellamy's philosophy was noted by EPIC, while the Utopians used the speaking engagement as an opportunity to expound on Bellamyism, asserting that "the work of Edward Bellamy, we believe, has given a distinctly American aspect to the possibility of a better and juster social order, based on American traditions and procedure. It is fundamentally the same as the Utopian philosophy and has influenced the thinking of millions the world over during the last fifty years."⁷⁸

It would not have been surprising for The Utopian Society, like many left-leaning groups during the era, to find comradeship with the principles of *Looking Backward* – its immense popularity positioned it "top of mind" for many decades, and Bellamy's prescient foregrounding of the rural-urban and technology conflicts that resonated in 1930s Southern California made the work especially relevant there. Both Bellamyism and the Utopians entered the California

⁷⁶Article, "Mrs. Edward Bellamy and Daughter," Utopian News section, EPIC News, Vol. 3, No. 27, November 30, 1936, 5, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

⁷⁷"Mrs Bellamy and Daughter." 2.

⁷⁸Article, "A Fine Treat in Store," Utopian News section, EPIC News, Vol. 3, No. 24, November 9, 1936, 5, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

political scene rapidly; *Looking Backward* almost immediately became a best-seller and Bellamy clubs were quickly formed throughout the nation; The Utopian Society claimed as many as seven-hundred thousand followers (huge for such an abstract movement). Both movements also faded quickly, though the very existence of the Utopian Society half a century after Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward* demonstrates that at least the ideals of Bellamyism survived in ways that later movements drawing from these same ideals may not have recognized.

If Bellamyism stimulated an interest in actively creating a better society (albeit a white-supremacist one), it is important to ask whether The Utopian Society's clear and unusual embrace of racial equality, though it may not have contributed much to civil rights for African Americans on its own, helped to show that interracial activism was both necessary and possible within the American mainstream. It marks another turning point in the conceptualization of utopia – from racial homogeneity to racial diversity. Most scholars, if they think about the concept of utopia surviving at all, would locate this transformation a few years later when the holocaust completely invalidated the notion of a racially homogeneous utopia, but there is a case to be made that this process probably began a decade earlier and a continent apart. While California was clearly an early model of a state that implemented racially restrictive laws, it is also possible to look at California as a territory where the idea of overturning such laws began to be seen as the way to a better society.⁷⁹

In the years following the end of World War II there emerged another (perhaps the last) manifestation of Southern California Bellamyism that was not born from the optimism of either the late nineteenth century or the New Deal. It was also grounded in literature and its founder was, in fact, a novelist, but it emerged out of fear and desperation: the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which changed the possibilities and topology of the utopian landscape.

⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the forgotten episode of State-sponsored eugenics. See Alexandra Minna Stern, 211-215.

The cooperative dream was resurrected after World War II, when Southern Californians promoted an idea called “The California Colony Program” by forming a not-for-profit corporation to explore opportunities for funding and promoting utopian settlements. In 1946 The Reciprocal Economy Foundation warned that “Our informed people now tell us that due to the discovery of atomic power, the next disaster may be so serious that it will destroy our civilization.”⁸⁰ The Foundation, whose founder Hjalmar Rutzebeck had written a semi-factual novel about the Depression-era Unemployed Exchange Associations called *Hell’s Paradise*, concluded after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that “With that ghastly possibility confronting us, we are justified in seeking a new way to live, a way from which men may expect more satisfactory results and greater hope.”⁸¹ To that end, Rutzebeck, who had been involved in both FDR’s New Deal administration and Upton Sinclair’s EPIC movement, hoped to succeed where previous utopian settlements had failed. “For this purpose,” Rutzebeck explained, “a small group of men and women here in Los Angeles has decided to establish a foundation. This, the Reciprocal Economy Foundation, is organized for the purpose of seeking a new way to live. The founders of the foundation call upon thoughtful people to help in the quest of a new way to live.”⁸²

The Reciprocal Economy Foundation was to be “a non-political, and non-sectarian organization, open for membership to all Americans regardless of color, race or creed.”⁸³ Building on New Deal programs he admired during the Depression, Rutzebeck planned to fund colonies that exchanged labor for goods, rather than money. There is no record that any such

⁸⁰ Pamphlet, Hjalmar Rutzebeck, *The California Colony Program* (Los Angeles: The Reciprocal Economy Foundation, 1946), Los Angeles Public Library, Main Branch, Social Sciences Vertical File – “L.A. Organizations.”

⁸¹ Rutzebeck, 2.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*, 13.

colonies ever blossomed in Southern California, but the very notion that a corporate capitalist mechanism openly could solicit the financing for an alternative economic system demonstrates that some vestige of dialogue between utopia and capitalism survived the Second World War, at least for a moment or two.

That the mid-century examples of Mankind United, the Utopian Society, and the Reciprocal Economy Association all manifested in Los Angeles is not coincidence. Like the Bellamyism that to some extent informed them, they all purported to be national or even international movements, but they gained the most traction in the Southland. Lifeways in Los Angeles, from the geographic layout of neighborhoods to the architectural design of homes, were framed in such a way that people who lived in this area conceived of the dialogue between future and present as an intrinsic part of daily life. Noting again that this dialogue – even for those organizations like Mankind United, the Utopian Society, and the Reciprocal Economy Foundation that articulated a racially inclusive message – never broke through the color line in a meaningful way – future and present in Southern California were much less constrained by other (non-racial) predetermined boundaries.

A century of continuous narrative reinvention had created a textual geography where lifeways could be edited and rewritten in both good and bad times. If there was an “exceptional” tradition growing in California, as early boosters had always claimed, it was the ability to see fruit-lands in the desert, tropical gardens on arid land, health in disease-ridden marshes that straddled an emerging urban metropolis, and a “progressing” social order in spite of poverty and

unemployment. No matter how much land had been sold, subdivided, and developed, there always seemed to be at least “Five-Thousand Acres of Paradise” that remained.⁸⁴

Indeed, as the next chapter will attempt to show, booster claims and utopian projects, though motivated by different politics, shared common narratives, values, and promotional technologies.

⁸⁴ Booster promotion from the 1900s through the 1920s that variously described land for sale in Riverside, Los Angeles, or Orange Counties. Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 76, Folder 14, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

CHAPTER 4: ERECTING THE FRAMES

While human-made places are constructed from many materials, the origins of the imagined topography of Los Angeles point directly to early booster literature. In 1876, so the Chamber of Commerce said, the county of Los Angeles encompassed “the finest body of agricultural land, of equal extent, on the continent.” And the chamber’s use of the term “agriculture” was nearly without earthly limitation, for within the boundaries of Los Angeles, soil had “capacities for the production of everything in the cereal, pomological, and vegetable kingdoms. The fruits of the Semi-Tropics and of the Temperate Zones grow and flourish side by side, and in such diversity and perfection that absolutely nothing is lacking to ensure success to the intelligent and industrious tiller of the soil.”¹ This, in any event, was what the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce claimed.

The Chamber later insisted, moreover, that “full definition of agriculture is our birthright in Southern California, for here it has reached greatest development as an industry and a mode of living.”² Los Angeles was, as the chamber put it, “the magic city.”³ When Los Angeles boosters coined that moniker for the city (and later for the entire county) they had the area’s remarkable population growth in mind, but it applied equally to the city’s imaginary union of urban and rural cultures. Bringing city and countryside into the same space was quite a magical performance, but magic is usually sleight of hand, and the magic frame that bounded the interior of Los Angeles was no exception.

¹ Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Condition, Progress & Advantage of Los Angeles City and County of Southern California* (Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce: Los Angeles, CA, 1876), 5.

² Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Los Angeles the Center of an Agricultural Empire* (Los Angeles: Agricultural Department of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1929), 2.

³ Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Los Angeles (The Magic City)* (Los Angeles: Research Department of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1925).

Developer Marshall Hartranft had called the core area of Los Angeles “the charmed circle of the glorious climate of Southern California,” and claimed that this was a place “where mere existence is counted perpetual pleasure.”⁴ Hartranft plotted an elaborately detailed map of the region, divided it into labeled quadrants, and drew an eighteen mile circle around the city of Los Angeles. He reminded his readers that “you know what land values are in the section marked “A.” It was Hartranft’s goal to demonstrate a little magic of his own by “guaranteeing” that the quadrant marked “D” would be just as beautiful and would eventually yield as much profit as area “A,” which included Brentwood and Palms. While Hartranft sincerely wanted to help poor and middle class white people purchase homes, he conceived of utopian colonies first as a real estate sales strategy; social benefits, in his formula, were product attributes, nothing more.

Consequently, Marshall Hartranft’s planned community, the Little Lander’s of Tujunga colony of Los Terrenitos, ideologically, practically, and legally straddled the line between utopian colony and subdivided real estate development project. Hartranft managed the promotion, sales, and homebuilding for this project through two of his many corporations, the Western Empire Suburban Farms Association and the California Home Extensions Association. In 1913, the geography of Tujunga brought real rural attributes into the idea of building adjacent a burgeoning city – in fact the colony fought for years to extend the Los Angeles County Rural Route mail delivery to the modern bungalow households that members insisted were part of a rapidly urbanizing neighborhood. If some community leaders did tend to promote broader utopian ideals, many community members simply admired homeownership and wanted to learn to produce their own food.

⁴ Hartranft, *Western Empire*, 27.

Marshall Hartranft, idealist though he may have been in some respects, was at heart a real estate developer – of this there is no doubt – regardless of the language he later used to describe the purpose of these ventures.⁵ In development after development, he executed an explicit land acquisition and sales strategy, which he articulated clearly in promotional pamphlets. “It is in the populating of lands where cattle roamed yesterday that there exists the safe profits for investors,” according to Hartranft. This was his strategy: buy large tracts of former grazing land at extremely low prices; “it is safe,” he insisted, “because it is getting land at first prices, below which it cannot go,” and such land would be “surely profitable, because it is used for far more valuable purposes.”⁶ Subconsciously, the connection between former grazing land and progressive real estate development invoked the old myth of proper resource utilization, reinforcing the teleology of Anglo land stewardship. Underutilized acreage could be purchased inexpensively, and if it could be improved (which was possible merely by asserting Anglo ownership) and sold quickly, it could turn a meaningful profit. This, then, is one of the reasons selling to a cooperative colony might have been a successful strategy for Hartranft; in the case of Tujunga, for example, four-hundred Anglo families could purchase individual lots at once.

In 1911, after perfecting his utopian-colony sales strategy and completing eight major real estate deals in California going as far back as 1904, Hartranft was ready to sub-divide the acreage he called his “Ninth Great Home Making Project in California, Monte Vista Park.” Hartranft hoped to profit from his land investment by following a discipline he called, “a Study of the Science of Farm Community Building on the Unoccupied Lands of the West.” This study consisted of a promotional methodology to teach consumers the best way to engage in “land-

⁵ See *Hartranft for Congress*, (June 16, 1934), Volume 1, Number 1, Little Landers Collection, Sunland-Tujunga Little Landers Historical Society, Bolton Hall Museum, Tujunga, CA. Notably, when Hartranft ran for congress in 1932 and 1934 (Liberty Party ticket), his curriculum vitae transformed the sale of individual real estate lots to the notion that he “organized 400 families of settlers.”

⁶ Hartranft, *Western Empire*, 27.

banking and home loan securing,” and required Hartranft to produce some of the most eloquent and persuasive real estate literature that had ever been published. William E. Smythe was the perfect prospect for Hartranft; as we have seen, he was an idealistic utopian who had, in fact, already attempted to build a cooperative colony in San Ysidro, and who diligently had studied the relationship between land ownership and liberty. On his own, however, Smythe had not been a successful businessman, and such a deficiency translated into not being a successful colonist, either.

This unfortunate fact Smythe expected to change with Hartranft fronting the difficult business arrangements (e.g. purchasing land, interacting with the local authorities, maintaining the requisite business contacts). Smythe, for his part, would recruit the colonists and attempt to lead the cooperative community. He promised prospective settlers a way to avoid the high cost of living. The only way to control one’s own destiny could be summarized, according to Smythe, “In a word—Land.” Farming in proximity to the city would prove that “the soil is the only refuge for the great numbers of men and women possessing a little ready capital, abundant energy, and an ambition to achieve individual independence.” Moreover, in the turbulent labor environment of Los Angeles in 1913, it was “the only way to be sure of a living, regardless of strikes, lockouts, panics and high prices.” A foresighted person should “collect [a] living straight from the soil,” and own a home, which was critical in such uncertain times, because “the only way to make sure that the landlord will not raise your rent or turn you out is to be your own landlord.”⁷ Though there is evidence that Smythe was politically radical (not the least of which is his association with the radical lawyer Bolton Hall), his ideas were never heavy handed; most of his social messages were rather subtle – even understated.

⁷William Smythe, “How to Avoid the High Cost of Living,” *The Western Empire Land—Banking and Home Securing Plan* (January 1911) Los Angeles, CA, 1, Little Landers Collection, Sunland-Tujunga Little Landers Historical Society, Bolton Hall Museum Collections, Tujunga, CA.

Hartranft, on the other hand, presented his system for a better life quite forthrightly, though cooperative colonization was not his first priority. Rather, what was important in his home-purchase scheme was that “it is financed so that the home and health seeker may go upon the land, make his improvements and build the community without a heavy drain of cash capital for the land at the very start.”⁸ Still, the back-to-the-land philosophy combined profit-motives and patriotism, for as Hartranft insisted, “The destiny of our nation rests in the landed proprietorship of the many, not of the few.” “The many” would be located through the national advertising of the California Home Extension Association, which was Hartranft’s vehicle to locate prospective buyers. It would bring them to the sites of his potential land deals, arrange all the pre-development business, and in later enterprises, actually lease (with an option to buy) the land to potential home purchasers. Land, it is important to note, was sold in individual lots – even to those who planned to form colonies. The colony, and Little Landers of Tujunga fits this model, functioned primarily as a buyers cooperative, supposedly to secure land at the best price, while at the same time advantaging the developer because all the lots were sold at once (which Hartranft would later tout as a social benefit because it would build the community rapidly). Consequently, the successful formation of a cooperative colony could not be guaranteed, for no covenants prevented individuals from selling their own private lots at will (at least in Hartranft’s developments).

Still, the motivation behind the Little Landers sales strategy tapped into a deep need that Southern Californians had been attempting to meet since urbanization began to change the landscape in the 1880s. Rebalancing rural and urban attributes also was a theme many popular novelists had been addressing since the industrial revolution, including Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Hamlin Garland, and Edward Lee Masters. Bellamy, however,

⁸ Smythe, *The Western Empire*, 6.

was the most widely read writer who purported to actually have a solution to the problem; and by the early twentieth century, Los Angeles seemed primed to build that solution. Hartranft transformed such literary ideas into commercial developments, highlighting the possibility that the colony later to be called Tujunga might be perfect “for those of our readers who prefer acreage tracts close to our famous city, where they can enjoy all of the social, educational and religious advantages of city life, rather than the out-and-out country life of the farm home, on our lower cost acres in the Valley Oaks district [near Bakersfield].”⁹ The development was to be funded by a \$210,000 bond secured by a trust deed; bondholders could purchase the acreage of what would be called Tujunga for \$300 (net) an acre.¹⁰

While the four-hundred original buyers did enter agreements to purchase Hartranft’s acreage, in a letter from William Smythe to Frederick Ashby dated January 6, 1914 (less than one year after the colony’s founding), it is clear that turmoil was already erupting and Smythe recognized his shortcomings as a leader. He outlined a message for Ashby to convey to the colonists, emphasizing that, “I want our people to appreciate the fact that every acre acquired and sold means more comfort and prosperity for all because the profit is dedicated to public uses. I would scarcely dare to tell you the things which might be done to make our Vale of Monte Vista a paradise—if we only had the money.” His plan was to leverage the private financial apparatus of capitalism (e.g. real estate sales and financing) by attempting to subordinate it to a political and social cause. Unfortunately, this strategy was never as opaque, and consequently, never as successful, as Smythe would have liked.

⁹ Smythe, *The Western Empire*, 15.

¹⁰ Not inexpensive for the times, but lower than the cost of smaller downtown lots, and presumably the colony’s communal activities and individual farming could reduce other costs of living in this area that was still close to the city.

Taxing colonists might have been a more socialist way to increase capital, but Smythe remained opposed to all taxes except the excess land value tax proposed by Henry George, asserting to Ashby that “There is but one way to get the money, aside from taxation, and that is by buying land as cheaply as we can and selling it at a profit. You have the House of Little Landers to do the selling.”¹¹ While the irony of appropriating the moniker of a commercial capitalist enterprise (“House of”) for a utopian community (let alone the irony of a single-taxer proposing to make a profit from land) may have gone unnoticed, Smythe insisted that “No lesson we shall teach the world is more valuable than this: that the increment in land values created by the presence of a growing community belongs of right to its creators, and that when this increment shall be made available there is nothing essential to the common welfare that may not be had, in time.”¹² Ironically, it was the idealist Smythe, perhaps following Hartranft’s lead, who brought the colony from intensive farming to intensive real estate selling. So intensive, in fact, that within six short years enough of the original colonists had sold their land that the original utopian colony concept ended, though the idea of community cooperation on the land in Tujunga continued in several other incarnations.

In fact, Hartranft would continue to sell land in Tujunga, even after the colony of Los Terrenitos had stopped functioning (between 1917 and 1918.) Hartranft continued to own the clubhouse, and also promoted the resale of lots. By 1922, in alignment with the racially restrictive covenants Angelenos were writing into individual deeds, his real estate brochure, “My Hand Made Home in the Hills,” noted that the “purchase of property is restricted to native

¹¹Unpublished letter from William E. Smythe to Frederick M. Ashby, dated January 6, 1914. Little Landers Folders, Sunland-Tujunga Little Landers Historical Society, Bolton Hall Museum Collections, Tujunga, CA.

¹²ibid.

Americans, white, and of good reputation.”¹³ Hartranft’s earlier brochures had not mentioned such restrictions, and Smythe’s articles and speeches never brought up the issue of race. On the other hand, there certainly was never a racially inclusive message in any discussion about the colony. Though Smythe did often speak about his hope that the elimination of class and occupational bias would result from the Little Lander efforts, no similar wishes about a post-racial future were ever articulated.

Tujunga had drawn interest because it exemplified what boosters and scholars alike identified as one of the most attractive aspects of Southern California’s promotional message; the combination of rural and urban attributes in a single location.¹⁴ Even after the failure of Los Terrenitos as a utopian colony, the characteristics of the geography continued to make it a desirable, high growth territory. When it was annexed by the city of Los Angeles, like the Charles Weeks Colony less than a decade later, Tujunga would become another weapon in the Chamber of Commerce arsenal aimed at attracting the right kind of laborers to the modern city of Los Angeles.

Los Terrenitos was not the only attempt to reinvent household and community in Southern California during the early twentieth century. In 1914, after twice failing in runs for mayor of Los Angeles, Job Harriman also dreamt of founding a colony – not as a real estate strategy – but as a self-sustaining socialist community that could invoke the magic connection between city and country – industry and agriculture – that the politically charged city of Los Angeles was struggling to make real. Harriman, another socialist who had been an active

¹³ Marshall V. Hartranft, “My Hand Made Home in the Hills, 1922 real estate brochure reprinted in Mary Lou Pozzo, *Founding Sisters: Life Stories of Tujunga’s Early Women Pioneers 1886-1926* (Tujunga: Zinnia Press, 2005), 133. When Hartranft writes “native Americans,” he is referring to non-immigrant citizens, not to Indians. This clause has occasionally been misinterpreted by historians examining Hartranft’s writings.

¹⁴ Bolton Hall himself had emphasized this dimension of intensive farming colonies in his foundational work, *Three Acres and Independence*, which inspired the Back-to-the-Land movement in California.

member of a Los Angeles Bellamy Club, purchased land in the Antelope Valley at a remarkably fair price, recruited skilled and unskilled workers to build the dream, and set out to actualize his new world. It soon failed, not because it lacked funding; certainly not because it lacked expertise, but because even if it had been true that “anything grows” in Southern California, it was equally true that “anything,” or “everything” (in spite of the claims of fig farmers) needed water, and that Southern California capitalism did not yet consider water to be part of the commons. One could privately purchase the water rights to enable or throttle success. Harriman and the Llano del Rio board of directors, it seemed, were not the experienced real estate developers they pretended to be, for the \$10 an acre bargain property they purchased from the Mojave Development Company in Antelope Valley may have seemed to be wonderful agricultural land only a short drive north of Los Angeles, but at that price indisputable water rights – at least to accessible water – were not included.¹⁵ Certainly anyone colonizing remote areas of Southern California would have been cognizant of the need to secure water, but Llano’s founders had underestimated the engineering that might be required to support a community using these meager natural resources.¹⁶

¹⁵ Harriman and the founders had, in fact, purchased the water rights of the Mescal Water and Land Company – again at a bargain basement price – but much of the water proved inaccessible without building a dam. Permits for that construction were denied by the California Commissioner of Corporations on the grounds that the Llano colonists had neither the experience nor the capital to complete the project successfully. See Francis Shor, *Utopianism and Radicalism in Reforming America, 1888 – 1918* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 173.

¹⁶ There is a great deal of disagreement about what exactly happened with regard to water. Earlier commentators, including Aldous Huxley and Paul Kagan thought that Llano was overpopulated for the available water. See Aldous Huxley and Paul Kagan, “A Double Look at Utopia: The Llano del Rio Colony,” *California Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer 1972), 117-154. When the colony was active, reporters appeared to believe the colonists’ contention that “enough is known to assure an irrigated area of ten thousand acres or more of any crops, enough to support a population of five thousand souls and have a surplus of product for the open market.” From a pamphlet called *The Gateway to Freedom*, published by the Llano del Rio Company, quoted in A.R. Clifton, “History of the Communistic Colony Llano Del Rio,” in *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1918): 80-90. Hugh Hanna, a non-partisan observer employed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Llano in 1916 and expressed the same point of view. See Hugh S. Hanna, “The Llano Del Rio Cooperative Colony,” *Monthly Review of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January, 1916): 19-23. These views add credence to the idea that Harriman and the directors of the colony had misevaluated the usefulness of water resources that they had attempted to secure.

Antelope Valley has often been the ground for real estate schemes based on half-truths or rumors.¹⁷ But in 1914 it seemed to be the frontier for an alternative social order, with Job Harriman, who had almost been elected mayor of Los Angeles, as its leader. “His personal magnetism,” according to a newspaper article written in the 1990s, “had attracted a collection of 1,000 left-wing activists to make the arduous trek to the Antelope Valley. Participants contributed about \$500 each for equipment and tools and then built a sawmill, lime kiln, dairy, cannery, bakery, printing plant, hotel, offices, barns, and houses.”¹⁸ Neither was this Harriman’s first involvement with utopia, for, while he was most known for Clarence Darrow’s and his legal defense of the McNamara brothers and his bids to be mayor of Los Angeles, he had also been involved in the short-lived Northern California utopian community of Altruria, and had founded the Bellamyite Pacific Nationalist Club.¹⁹

In 1917, three years after its founding, the masthead of Llano del Rio’s weekly newspaper declared that “Llano is the Only Co-operative City in the World.”²⁰ Perhaps an overreaching claim (there were several other cooperative colonies in Southern California alone), but most interesting because it shows that Llano’s citizens saw their community both as “a city” and as part of the world – not withdrawn from it, as may have been typical for many other utopian colonies. Where the Tujunga Little Landers actually became a city and subsequently were absorbed by an even larger one, Llano del Rio saw itself as maintaining a separate identity

¹⁷ John Glionna, “Redman Lawyer Calls Charge Double Jeopardy,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1996, accessed online July 10, 2010 at http://articles.latimes.com/1996-06-21/local/me-17108_1_double-jeopardy. “Between 1978 and 1994 Redman’s three real estate firms took in millions of dollars annually while failing to deliver on promises about zoning and utilities.” Redman was accused specifically of targeting “unsophisticated” Latin American California’s to sell overvalued land in Antelope Valley.

¹⁸ Cecelia Rasmussen, “L.A. Then and Now,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1999, section B3, California Biography File – Job Harriman, Vertical Files, Los Angeles Public Library Main Branch, Los Angeles, CA.

¹⁹ Cecelia Rasmussen, “A Socialist Who Almost Was Mayor,” “L.A. Then and Now,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1999, accessed online July 2010, at: <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/oct/31/local/me-28346>.

²⁰ *The Llano Colonist*, published at Llano, California, Saturday, April 21, 1917, vol. 1, no. 32, California Vertical File – Colonies, Cooperative – Llano del Rio, Los Angeles Public Library Main Branch, Los Angeles, CA.

while still networked into mainstream Antelope Valley and Los Angeles daily life. Even the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported favorably on Llano in 1916, asserting that “it is not based upon any dogma or creed, except the belief in the practicability of cooperation as a business and social principle.”²¹ Of course, this was not true; along with Harriman the colony had been founded by members of the Young People’s Socialist League (YPSL), but the idea that even government employees who were studying the colony envisioned it to be a legitimate part of California’s capitalism shows that the dialogue of “cooperation” was mainstream and acceptable.

The year after Hanna’s report, in 1917, “Llano,” according to its members, “[was] fast becoming a well-oiled and capable machine with all parts co-ordinated. Only those who have lived here and have taken part in this organization work can conceive of the tremendous problem with which we are confronted.”²² This problem, ironically, mirrored the challenge Los Angeles boosters faced, for, as the Llano organizers had learned, “bringing people from all parts of the country, even from all parts of the world, and all of them with a common set of ideals but with no practical knowledge of how to attain them, is creating a problem that must be solved.”²³ But unlike L.A., “Llano,” according to its promoters, “is solving it.”²⁴

Indeed, Llano established its own Efficiency Commission, Building Committee, and Board of Directors. All were well coordinated, and Llano members believed that “old established governments will soon be able to learn valuable lessons from Llano.”²⁵ Llano’s comrades were not, as is clear from these statements, insulating themselves from surrounding cities; they saw their settlement as an example that could be used to improve Southern California

²¹ Hanna, 20.

²² *The Llano Colonist*, April 21, 1917.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

generally, and believed they were part of a much wider radical (or maybe even progressive) movement.

Neither was the Llano community isolated from its neighbors. While relations may not always have been cordial or cooperative, Llano residents always perceived that they were part of the Antelope Valley agricultural community and attempted to integrate into it, noting that “the exchange of Colony labor for fruit solved the labor problem of our neighbors, and gave the Colony a plentiful supply of delicious fruit. Picking, pruning, and planting work paid for the apples and pears.”²⁶ Labor, agricultural knowledge, and fruit may have been exchanged between the Llano community and its neighbors like currency, but water, even more dear, was not.

Non-residents of the colony from Los Angeles purchased advertisements in Llano’s community paper, and there must also have been substantial readership among non-residents, for the paper always included a long section of want ads expressing the colonists’ needs that could not be fulfilled by community resources. One such ad, in the April 21, 1917 edition, is headlined in all capital letters, “SHEEP WANTED.” “The Colony Wants Sheep,” the ad goes on to say, and asks that all communication be channeled to Frank L. Wright at the Llano del Rio Colony.²⁷ While it is unlikely that this advertiser was the architect Frank Lloyd Wright on a brief, and heretofore unknown, sheepherding interlude, it is likely that Wright the architect was very familiar with Llano del Rio, as his acquaintance and fellow architect Rudolph Schindler often discussed building a socialist city with his friend and the founder of Llano del Rio, Job Harriman.²⁸ Even if Llano’s Frank L. Wright was not the famed designer of buildings, it is

²⁶ *The Llano Colonist*, April 21, 1917.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Letter from Harriman to Schindler, 7 July 1924, Schindler Papers, UCSB, cited in Marco De Michelis, “Rudolph Schindler: the Invention of an American Tradition,” *The Canadian Centre for Architecture*, accessed online October 2014, at: http://www2.cca.qc.ca/pages/Niveau3.asp?page=mellon_demichelis&lang=fra.

certain he was a designer of a new form of urban modernity – city and country combined in a socially progressive place; something he and the other Frank L. Wright had in common.

In the 1930s, surviving proponents of the century's early "co-operative" movement would look back to Llano del Rio as an example of what Upton Sinclair popularized as "production for use villages." In fact, in late 1937 as Sinclair's former newspaper, *The EPIC News*, was beginning to fizzle, and the EPIC movement itself was fading into the California sunset, one former Llano colonist used the available newsprint in an attempt to build a linear narrative connecting the early colony to New Deal cooperatives, and the lesson of a failed commune to the instruction manual for unemployed self-help.

If, as literary scholar Djelal Kadir asserts, "memory determines distinct ways of enabling a culture to manage its past and negotiate its present,"²⁹ beginning with a single column called "Cooperative Colonies and Production for Use Villages," in a new section of the *EPIC News* called "Cooperatives," former Llano colonist Walter Millsap relied on his personal memory to resurrect the culture of the socialist colony movement. First, he revived an original Upton Sinclair idea about cooperative colonies, which never came to fruition, but which Sinclair had emphasized when he began EPIC in late 1933. Sinclair had called for repossessed or bankrupt farms and factories to be given to California's unemployed so that new productive enterprises could be established that would provide families with subsistence and surplus. Three years after even Sinclair's newspaper stopped mentioning such ideas, Millsap claimed "it seems that literally hundreds of the people who have sustained the *EPIC News* by their donations and their sacrifices, have done so in the belief that it was the logical medium which might serve to find and bring together the people who were eager to see a village of cooperative enterprises

²⁹ Djelal Kadir, *Memos from the Besieged City: Lifelines for Cultural Sustainability* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 89.

established again in California.”³⁰ Established “again,” is an interesting way to characterize California’s cooperatives, since the type of “production for use villages” Sinclair and Millsap were proposing had never actually existed, except in utopian literature, of course.

Millsap’s first article was a kind of primer for potential colonists: he revealed the “dos” and “don’ts” for people wishing to join or start new villages. The piece was short, but Millsap announced that if the financial distress of the *EPIC News* could be resolved, he was going to serialize a new weekly column called “The Land of the Other Way,” which would detail his experiences at Llano del Rio and serve as an object lesson for those who wish to join the “production for use” movement. In the end, the *EPIC News* did not solve its financial problems, and Millsap’s column never really got off the ground.

Industry was not the only dimension of modernity adopted early by the community of Llano del Rio. Historians of revolution have often commented about the changing of time that can accompany the dawn of a new regime – the French Republican Calendar was an obvious example of this. Similarly, Llano del Rio proposed and acted upon a plan to change time – but it was not of its own making (to paraphrase H.G. Wells’ description of his time machine); it was early adoption of the daylight savings concept that Europe began during the First World War. While the United States did not implement daylight savings time until March 19, 1918 (and later that national idea was repealed), Llano del Rio proudly announced on April 18, 1917 that “Llano Clocks Advanced: It is 8 O’Clock Now at 7.”³¹ Llano was convinced that daylight savings would save gasoline and oil, but they also saw themselves as an example for the country: “Socialist Community Leads Country in Saving Daylight,” they proclaimed, and insisted that “Llano colonists have taken their place in the vanguard of progress. The efficiency of time as well as

³⁰ Walter Millsap, “Cooperative Colonies and Production for Use Villages,” *EPIC News* (Vol. 4, No. 9, July 26, 1937), 5, Box 4, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections, California State University, Long Beach.

³¹ *The Llano Colonist*, April 21, 1917.

efficiency of all other things is the ideal of the people of Llano as they have demonstrated that they are willing to live up to their ideals.”³² If “anything could grow” in California, it was still true that growth required labor, and labor should be done as efficiently and comfortably as possible, as any utopian knew. Time could be the servant of people, rather than people being the servants of time.

The notion that “anything grows” still resonated in 1923 when the chamber of commerce invited the cooperative poultry farmer Charles Weeks to adapt the form of his Palo Alto agricultural colony to the terrain and resources of the recently annexed San Fernando Valley. They implied that any territory which might be declared a part of Los Angeles would, by some miracle of agrology, also become the finest body of land on the continent.³³ To prove this, city leaders would promote what reformers had been saying for twenty years – urban and rural ways of life needed to be combined in a modern place.³⁴

After four decades of fine-tuning sectional promotion to secure waves of health, land, citrus, and oil rushes, Los Angeles boosters knew precisely what social needs and human desires could be tapped to stimulate predictable and profitable city growth.³⁵ And in Los Angeles, working in agriculture, according to the chamber of commerce, created the highest possible quality of life. This was, however, a mostly imaginary agricultural mode of living, for it ignored the majority of workers that Southern California agriculture demanded – Native Americans,

³²Millsap, “Cooperative Colonies.”

³³That this claim was a foundational part of area boosterism is evident. See: “Los Angeles,” *The Overland Monthly*, Volume XI, Second Series (Jan – June, 1888 (San Francisco: Bacon & Company Printers,) n.p., approximately 227. Boosters in 1888 – on the verge of the real estate collapse – promoted the agricultural productivity of any area that would become a part of Los Angeles. By the time that the Charles Weeks colony flourished, annexation was almost mandatory, as Los Angeles had monopolized nearly all the area’s water rights, thus fulfilling the prophecy that becoming part of Los Angeles would assure more productive (irrigated) agriculture.

³⁴ Paul Sandul has examined Ontario, CA to highlight the differences between Southern California patterns of suburbanization, which emphasize the combination of urban culture and rural areas. They do not necessarily grow out of an urban core, as traditional explanations of suburbanization suggest. Sandul calls these spaces “Agriburbs.” See Paul Sandul, “The Agriburb: Recalling the Suburban Side of Ontario, California’s Agricultural Colonization,” *Agricultural History*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (Spring 2010): 195-223.

³⁵ Glen Gendzel, “Not Just a Golden State,” 349-378.

Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, and Filipinos. Those who did most of the agricultural work were the same people who had been systematically zoned and legislated out of the city's improvements, were prohibited from participating in the emerging self-empowering agricultural colonies, and were ignored even in most progressive plans for a future city. Race and place, intertwined from the very beginning of white settlement in California, were accorded no less critical a role in the future than they had been in the past. While literary cities could manage racial diversity by writing race out of narrative, plot, and character, physical cities wrote racial diversity out of its covenants, charters, and territory by institutionalizing segregation.

City planners and promoters, whether progressive or conservative, had learned that in Los Angeles profitable real estate development was not just about subdividing land and building farms or tract homes; it was about subdividing social order and building hope. Since 1910 the Janss Investment Company had been bringing (white) housing to the Valley, but Charles Weeks could bring something more – a utopian social order that expanded, rather than disrupted, capitalist growth. For a generation whose experience had been punctuated by revolutions in Mexico and Russia, the destruction of the old European social orders, and popular movements of radical ideas at home, promising a utopia within capitalism seemed to make sense. It seemed like a typical Los Angeles possibility; this was the reality of Southland exceptionalism. There may not have been much difference between L.A. and other places, but projects that were acknowledged to be inconceivable elsewhere were imagined to be viable mainstream activities here. In Los Angeles, growth was generated from, as USC urban planning scholar Todd Gish has so aptly characterized it, “the political economy of promoting paradise.”³⁶

³⁶ Todd Gish, “Growing and Selling Los Angeles: The All-Year Club of Southern California, 1921-1941,” *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No. 4 (Winter 2007-2008): 392.

To be sure, paradise and poultry were not complete strangers in the Southland.³⁷ In 1915 Carl Laemmle converted Taylor Ranch, a 230-acre San Fernando Valley chicken farm, into Universal City.³⁸ Consequently, in the East Valley egg production had been replaced by a newer technology delivering the production of dreams, but less than twenty miles west of this fantasy city, the self-styled “practical idealist” Charles Weeks would use the system of chicken farming that he perfected in Palo Alto to re-imagine community development in the west San Fernando Valley.

Writing in his new Owensmouth poultry colony’s promotional magazine in 1923, Weeks declared that, “I have a far greater work than the mere subdivision of land. I am building,” he asserted, “an ideal community made up of successful people who wish to live this natural, healthful life close to Nature in a neighborhood of uniform, symmetrical, harmonious garden homes, where the highest science of intensive production is common knowledge to all.”³⁹ Though his mission may have extended beyond real estate development, the practical aspects of land and business acquisition were critical, and he explicitly instructed the colony’s prospective members that, “Each settler buys direct and pays cash for his land and gets a deed and certificate of title for same. Visit me in our home in the Model Acre,” he implored, “and I will show you how we keep 2,500 hens on one acre and make them net not less than \$2.00 each.”⁴⁰ In the prosperous mid-1920s there was no dearth of interested colonists, banks to arrange financing (for

³⁷ Southern California’s water shortage led people who advocated “intensive” small farming to experiment with the idea of raising poultry for subsistence and commercialization. Poultry could be raised on small plots of land that did not require irrigation, and, hence, seemed well suited to California’s particular characteristics.

³⁸ Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 122.

³⁹ Charles Weeks, *The Charles Weeks System of Intensive Poultry Farms: an exponent of practical idealism* Los Angeles, (September 1923), 4. California State University, Northridge Special Collections, Urban Archives, Charles Weeks Collection UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 1.

⁴⁰ Weeks, *System of Intensive Poultry Farms*, September 1923, 5.

the built- environment, not land), or construction companies to build homes, garages, and chicken coops.

If, in 1913 there was little to distinguish Charles Weeks from any other “scientific” poultry farmer,⁴¹ less than ten years later he had become an astute real estate developer and social architect, as well. Recognizing that many older Angelenos looking to relocate in semi-retirement might prefer a readymade farm to the prospect of constructing one from scratch, he built several operating models “on spec.” By 1924 a person could purchase an acre or two in the Owensmouth colony and build ones’ own structures, gardens, and groves, or select from Weeks’ prefabricated egg farms: For \$5,000, an aspiring utopian farmer could acquire one acre with planted feed, a poultry house for 1500 laying hens, and a 20x30 garage-feed room, which could be used for temporary living quarters until a permanent house was completed. For \$6,300, the new egalitarian social order would make available one acre laid out for green feed, a three-room cottage with bath, modern plumbing and electric lights, and poultry houses for 1,000 laying hens. At various times in the short life of the colony there were at least eight other ready-to-farm configurations, costing as little as \$1,500 or as much as \$9,500.⁴²

This is not meant to imply that Weeks was insincere in his expression of desire for radical social change; on the contrary, Weeks believed if the nation adopted his system of farming, it would be a better nation – and that the individuals in such communities would be better people. In fact, it is my argument that Weeks conceived of social and environmental transformation as integrated components of a progressive phase of capitalism that gradually would bring a more

⁴¹ Charles Weeks, “\$10,000 for Exhibition of Fancy Poultry and Pigeons,” *San Francisco Call*, Volume 13, Number 176, May 25, 1913, Commercial and Financial Section, page 1. Weeks’ article is devoted to promoting the idea that wealthy homes should have “poultry departments,” where breeding fancy chickens could be a refined and enjoyable hobby. Clearly a market extension for clever poultry farmers.

⁴² Charles Weeks, *The Charles Weeks System of Intensive Poultry Farms: an exponent of practical idealism*, Los Angeles, (February 1924), 17, UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 4, Charles Weeks Collection, Oviatt Library Urban Archives and Special Collections, California State University, Northridge.

utopian social order to the masses. It was not about reforming capitalism, but, rather, about evolutionary reforms within the human progression of capitalism. There always were choices that could be made within the capitalist system; choices which would bring about a more equal, fair, healthy, and pleasurable world. Radicalism and mainstream capitalism did not have to be opposites – they could be, and, as the examples of Weeks and others show, often were in conversation.⁴³

Nor was this conversation limited to the geographic or social periphery of Los Angeles. If we are tempted to portray the hegemony of Los Angeles' elite boosters and developers as uniform and dominated by material objectives, Weeks is but one of several examples demonstrating that the chamber of commerce employed a much more complex political calculus than scholars usually attribute to it. Another is the chamber's 1915 monograph, "Potato Growing in Southern California," a publication which notes that, "The Japanese have been especially successful in raising potatoes on a large scale in California. The Los Angeles papers," the chamber goes on to say, "recently published an interview with George Shima, known throughout the State as the 'Potato King,' who owns vast acreages in the swamp lands near Stockton in Central California. For a second time in four years this enterprising Japanese has succeeded in cornering the potato crop of the State, his operations even extending into Oregon, where the potato is produced on a large scale."⁴⁴ Praising the entrepreneurship of a Japanese businessman, let alone acknowledging the controversial fact that people of the Japanese "race" owned California land, was not at all common in California after the overwhelming public and legislative support for the anti-Japanese Alien Land Act, which passed the California Senate 35

⁴³ A Jewish chicken farmer, active in California during the Depression, remarked in an interview, "It just so happens I am a socialist and an enterpriser. . . . I would not be helping any workers by remaining poor." See Kenneth L. Kann, *Comrades and Chicken Ranchers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 81.

⁴⁴ Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Potato Growing in Southern California* (Los Angeles, January 1915), University of California, Irvine Special Collections and Archives, Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 87, Folder 4.

to 2 and Assembly 72 to 5 in 1913, only two years before this brochure was published. For the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, promoting the idea of economic opportunity trumped nativist and racist impulses stimulated by groups like California's Asiatic Exclusion League.

Similarly, the Charles Weeks Colony stands as another example that elite interests were not always tightly intertwined and elite power did not go unchallenged. Weeks did not sneak into the Los Angeles real estate scene; he was solicited – in fact persuaded – to move to the Southland – by the powerful Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, whose mission was to attract industry and capital to the city.⁴⁵ If the Chamber brought more than it bargained for to the recently annexed San Fernando Valley, it could not have been completely without design.

It may be true that members of the Chamber sought only economic development in the West Valley – not social reconfiguration. But Weeks never disguised either his utopianism or his anti-urbanism. Neither was utopianism a recent interest for Weeks; he had been, as early as 1890, an active member of a Bellamy Club in Chicago and had written a feature article for the movement's magazine, *The Nationalist*, entitled "Chicago Advances." In it Weeks promoted the movement to municipalize water, gas, electricity, and transportation, and rationalized these public initiatives with the aims of Bellamy's Nationalism. While little of Weeks' connection to Bellamyism seems to have remained visible in the "one acre and independence" philosophy that dominated his efforts in California, like many other public figures active in the 1920s, Weeks undoubtedly had developed his ideas about social reform from a foundation of literature and activism that took root when he read *Looking Backward*.

⁴⁵Charles Weeks, unpublished letter circa March 1923 [archivist's date note] from Owensmouth, California. California State University, Northridge Special Collections, Urban Archives, Charles Weeks Collection UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 9.

In the February issue of a 1924 promotional pamphlet, crafted as a kind of social prospectus for the new Owensmouth colony in the San Fernando Valley, Weeks remarked that, “I feel that my work is far from that of a real estate project. I feel that I am dealing with the most far reaching economical problem of the age—that of teaching humanity how to obtain the most abundant life on a very LITTLE LAND. I believe this teaching has in it the solution of the problems of strikes, revolutions and wars. It is the discontented people, crowded unnaturally into large cities, that make wars possible.”⁴⁶ Clearly, while Weeks promoted proximity to the city of Los Angeles as a market-benefit for small farmers, and he appreciated the high culture available in an urban setting, he positioned his system of “one acre” farms as necessary for the healthy improvement of human societies.

In fact, beginning with the July/August 1925 edition of the colony’s magazine, Weeks changed the publication’s title to *Little Farms: The Charles Weeks Magazine devoted to Intensive Agriculture and Intensive Human Culture: An exponent of Practical Idealism*. By linking pedagogical writing with communal settlement Weeks was promoting what cultural theorist Michael J. Shapiro, drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy’s work, calls the “community as literary communism.”⁴⁷ When they contributed to the colony magazine, Owensmouth residents both wrote and performed acts of poultry-colony citizenship.

This same issue of *Little Farms* provides a unique window into the far-reaching philosophical framework that informed Charles Weeks’ social ideals. By examining the literature Weeks republished that had been authored outside the community, clues about his politics clearly are revealed. Weeks offsets a lengthy passage by a writer who was at the time a well known

⁴⁶ Charles Weeks, “It is the Natural Life,” *Charles Weeks Intensive Poultry Colony* (undated), p. 4, California State University, Northridge, Library Special Collections, Urban Archive, Charles Weeks Collection, UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 11.

⁴⁷ Michael J. Shapiro, “National Times and Other Times: Re-Thinking Citizenship,” *Cultural Studies*, 14:1, (2000): 79-98.

novelist and socialist, George Allan England. England's writing is eloquent, unambiguous, and unabashedly revolutionary:

I yearn for a future which shall see no poverty, no crime, no vice, no unpaid labor nor any children's blood coined into dividends. When there shall no longer be any war or rumors of wars; when famine and pestilence shall be forgotten. When no longer one class shall enslave another to its tasks. When every man who will may labor freely, gladly, whether with hand or brain, and receive the product of his toil undiminished by any theft or purloining whatsoever. When governmental corruption shall become a thing of the oblivious past. When the earth and the fullness thereof shall belong to the whole people; and when its soil need be no longer fertilized with human blood, its crops brought forth watered by human tears.⁴⁸

England was an interesting ideological model, since, in spite of his earlier activism in Bellamy Clubs, Weeks never used the term socialism to describe his political ideas in California. Nor would the two men's worldviews seem on the surface to have been consistent. England emphasized dystopian futures throughout his literary productions (his short story "The Thing from – Outside" was included in Hugo Gernsback's first issue of *Amazing Stories* (April, 1926). Weeks, as is evident from both the Palo Alto and Owensmouth Colonies, always remained a hopeful and "practical" utopian idealist. But the social critique England expressed was also Weeks' view; they only differed in their assessments of the likelihood that various solutions would succeed. Alongside the England column and Weeks' editorial are quotes from John Ruskin and the transcendentalist William Ellery Channing, which indicate that Weeks identified with a line of literary and practical reformers and utopians. For Weeks, developing land was as critical to this project as developing the mind or soul. In fact, Weeks would argue that one would not succeed without the other.

⁴⁸ George Allen England, quoted in *Little Farms: The Charles Weeks Magazine devoted to Intensive Agriculture and Intensive Human Culture: An exponent of practical idealism*, (July/August 1925), 4-5, California State University, Northridge, Library Special Collections, Urban Archive, Charles Weeks Collection, UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 7.

But this was 1920s Los Angeles, and there were limits even to a radical's conception of reform. If the Weeks Colony contained a kernel of suburban utopia, it was a kernel for whites only. This was not unusual for alternative communities during the period. Even Job Harriman's Llano del Rio colony in Antelope Valley – not at all ambivalent about its socialist economic model or its distance from the social norms of Los Angeles with regard to gender roles – was also a utopia for whites only. All applications for membership from non-Caucasians were summarily rejected.⁴⁹

While race is not mentioned very often in Weeks' publications, it is clear from photographs of the colony that only Anglos lived there. This could have been an artifact of Los Angeles' racial composition – but in reality the city was quite diverse by 1920, and even in 1900 it had boasted the West's second largest African-American population.⁵⁰ Moreover, African Americans had already been active in back-to-the land colonies in Southern California and elsewhere in the West, as a want ad seeking “500 Negro families (farmers preferred) to settle on free government land in Chaves County, New Mexico” demonstrated.⁵¹ This colony, called Blackdom, was to be a “Negro colony” and promoted a paradise of “fertile soil, ideal climate, and no Jim Crow laws.”⁵² If the Weeks Colony had been open to African Americans it is likely that at least a few would have settled there. Exclusion, however, is consistent with the racially restrictive covenants Angelenos were enforcing in the 1920s, the influx of white Southerners who grew up with Jim Crow laws, and the groundbreaking zoning statutes (appearing in Los

⁴⁹ Francis Robert Shor, *Utopianism and Radicalism in Reforming America, 1888 – 1918* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 166.

⁵⁰ Delores Nason McBroome, “‘All Men Up and No Man Down’: Black Angelenos Confront Refracted Racism, 1900-1940,” in *City of Promise: Race and Historical Change in Los Angeles*, ed. by Martin Schiesl, Mark M. Dodge (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2006), 119.

⁵¹ Display Advertisement, *The Crisis* (August 1913), 197.

⁵² *ibid.*

Angeles by 1908) separating residential neighborhoods from industries tending to produce hazardous waste and to over-employ non-Caucasians.⁵³

“I am building a new kind of city,” Charles Weeks wrote in his catechism of ideals, but like most utopias, it was to be a city that overcame racial turmoil by eliminating racial diversity. Weeks’ philosophy of place is based on commonwealth and cooperation, but it demands homogeneity, and he asserted that, “In the building of the Charles Weeks Colonies only a high class people are selected, those living as nearly as possible on the same plane, all belonging to the Caucasian race.”⁵⁴ Though some readings could contend that this perspective, especially in 1920s Los Angeles, where the local Communist Party was already active in attempting to overturn racial discrimination in housing and employment, might disqualify the Weeks Colony as a radical project, such racial exclusivity is nearly an earmark of utopianism, whether in literature or intentional communities. In Weeks’ publications, the confluence of George England’s writing and the Colony’s ideological statements place racism and radicalism in direct conversation and alignment with utopian literature.

Literary utopianism – unconstrained by the legislative and statutory restrictions setting the boundaries for intentional communities – would seem to be a site where racism could be overcome – where ideals about racial harmony could be expressed. Yet of the hundreds of utopian novels published in the American market after the success of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* in 1888, very few even mention the issue of race. One of those that does – and it is the one selected by Charles Weeks for inclusion in his magazine – is George Allen England’s

⁵³ Christopher G. Boone, “Zoning and Environmental Inequity in the Industrial East Side,” in *Land of Sunshine: An Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles*, ed. by William Deverell and Greg Hise (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 170.

⁵⁴ Charles Weeks, “The Weeks Colony Ideals,” *Charles Weeks Intensive Poultry Colony* (undated): 10, California State University, Northridge Special Collections, Urban Archive, Charles Weeks Collection, UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 11.

trilogy *Darkness and Dawn*. While England was a socialist and revolutionary, he was also a racist and his novel is a white-supremacist prophecy, attributing the earth's post-apocalyptic dystopia in the year 2914 to the descendents of African Americans.⁵⁵

Of course Weeks and England were not alone among progressives or conservatives with respect to their ideas about race. By the 1920s, few Angelenos were immune from the influence of three decades of eugenic science that seemed applicable to improving all species of life. Even Los Angeles' prominent reformer Dr. John Randolph Haynes promoted socialism and civic philanthropy alongside a eugenic creed that "at once mirrored and extended into the world of plants and animals the Pacific West's brand of nativism and racial exclusion."⁵⁶ The science of selective improvement is reflected in the Chamber of Commerce's 1929 booster literature, where the authors just as well could have been referring to California's human population as to crops when they wrote, "we have selected the best strains and improved them; we have drawn exotics from the far lands and adopted them as our own; and now our crop range, commercially speaking, is equaled by no other producing district of the world."⁵⁷ Charles Weeks demonstrated the same principles in his poultry colony, where the proper selection of plants, animals, and people was producing a society in Los Angeles in which individuals were happier, healthier, free from overwork, and over-ambition. But homogeneity, rather than exotic diversity, was Weeks' goal: e-utopia, like eugenics, was always selective.

The race issue aside, in other ways the Los Angeles problem Charles Weeks set out to solve went beyond housing, and beyond providing financial security for individuals. Like many other agricultural progressives, he was a leveler of sorts; he wanted everyone in his colony to

⁵⁵ George Allen England, *Darkness and Dawn* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1914).

⁵⁶ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 119.

⁵⁷ Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Los Angeles – the Center of an Agricultural Empire* (Los Angeles: Agricultural Department of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1929), 2.

have the same resource opportunity and knowledge about production. Lots were supposed to all be one acre; the same fruit tree seedlings and vegetable seeds were available to everyone; chickens were bred and raised according to a standardized system intended to optimize their health. The idea was to generate income for life – without overwork. Industrialization had not been able to bring much leisure to workers, but chicken farms would – at least in Weeks’ social system.

Weeks, like Bradford Peck in literary utopia, did allow for some degree of economic variation – ultimately stratification – in his colony. He did not completely standardize the colony’s lot sizes, residences, or farm capacity. Though most promotional literature talked about one-acre lots, and his magazine’s first title was “One Acre and Independence,” two-acre plots were always available. Home sizes varied significantly, though none can be said to have been extravagant. The greatest variation seems to be in the number of chickens a farmer would raise and the types of fruits and vegetables that would comprise an individual garden. Weeks himself claimed to be producing eggs from 2,500 leghorns, a number that exceeded the capacity of any of his “pre-fabricated” farm models, bringing into question how or even if he expected the purchasers of these starter-farms to become self-sufficient.

While there are no known memoirs from colony members, or detailed accounts about farming in the colony, there is one extant oral history. This firsthand account of life during the later years in the colony comes from “The Oral History of the Early San Fernando Valley Project,” and is the transcript of a 1989 interview with then 82 year old Celeste Dameron, who lived in the colony beginning in 1929 (though her husband was there several years earlier and worked for Charles Weeks.) According to Dameron, a farmer needed 2,500 to 3,000 chickens to make a living; she notes that her farm had 1,500, which is why her husband also had to work for

Weeks.⁵⁸ Most gardens were similar, Dameron recalled, with grape arbors in the front, fruit trees, and a number of chicken coops in the back. Besides the community house, where neighbors gathered for meetings, entertainment, or lectures, Dameron's recollections seem typical of any semi-rural community around Los Angeles. If there was an ideological dimension to the Weeks Colony, she did not remember it in 1989.

It is possible that by the time Dameron joined the Colony, Weeks' original ideals were under some amount of stress. It was the eve of the Depression. Weeks still seemed to have owned at least 100 acres that remained unsold. In the wake of the 1920 Red Scare, political views may have been understated (Dameron recalls only a minimal amount of political discussion – mostly Democratic Party – by the late 1920s).⁵⁹ Whatever the reasons, only two years into the Colony's existence, in the same pamphlet where Weeks maintained that "the Colonies are pointing the way to higher independence for all people," and then confirmed that by "all people" he meant "all Caucasians," Weeks also clarified that land purchases did not need to be limited to one acre.

He still insisted that "one acre intensively cultivated is the ideal," but also claimed that "we do not limit our settlers to one if they want more. We know that when their ambitious days are over, they will settle down contented and happy on just one acre. For those that are young and ambitious a large ranch with peaches, walnuts, pears, or apricots with several thousand hens is a very enticing proposition. As a rule, however, our colony will be made up of one and two

⁵⁸ "Early San Fernando Valley Oral History Project: Interview with Celeste Dameron – the Charles Weeks Utopian Colony and Winnetka," interview conducted by Michael Nesbit (October 28 – December 14, 1989), CSUN Department of History and University Library's Urban Archives Center, Northridge, CA, final transcription June 1995 and PDF Version September 2003, 8.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 40.

acre farms with poultry and berries and home gardens.”⁶⁰ So, in its earliest phases, Charles Weeks’ utopian plan was already compromising with American capitalist enterprise – individualism had to be acknowledged and accommodated even as utopia was being plotted, planted, and peopled.

Weeks undoubtedly was trying to sell land he had been burdened with, but he may also have been battling the influence of the Chamber of Commerce when he began to relax the restrictions on farm size. Though the Chamber had brought Weeks to the San Fernando Valley because it believed “the lure of the little farm has been the dominant factor in the development of many rich agricultural communities in Southern California,” by the time Weeks’ colony began to fail in 1929, its directors had grown disillusioned with him and were openly antagonistic to the ideology underlying his poultry colony.⁶¹

To be sure, the Chamber had completely appropriated Weeks’ promotional concepts, asserting about small farms that “these tiny holdings combine the ideal rural environment with the conveniences of the city; permit indulgence in the pleasures of home beautification with the economies of a continued home-grown food supply; and an increased money income without sacrifice of sustaining employment.”⁶² In fact, the Chamber of Commerce even adapted utopianism to their promotion, claiming that “these little farms are Southern California’s best offering to the newcomer bent on establishing an ideal place.”⁶³ But the underlying foundation of the Weeks Colony itself – “One Acre and Independence,” was dismissed by the Chamber’s economists as they warned prospective farmers that “a unit of less than two acres is seldom

⁶⁰ Charles Weeks, “The Weeks Colony Ideals,” *Charles Weeks Intensive Poultry Colony* (undated), p. 12, UAC/CW 80-14 CWC, Box 1, Folder 11, Charles Weeks Collection, Urban Archives, Oviatt Library Special Collections, California State University, Northridge.

⁶¹ Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, “Agriculture . . . an Industry,” *Los Angeles – the Center of an Agricultural Empire* (Los Angeles: Agricultural Department of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1929), 6.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ibid.*

sustaining, and ‘independence on an acre’ is a misleading slogan.”⁶⁴ Notably, this was the same refrain they had used to critique Marshall Hartranft’s Tujunga colony more than fifteen years earlier. Of course, to some extent they were right: Hartranft’s colony had already failed, the Weeks colony was failing in 1929, and independence on an acre proved to be yet another Los Angeles imaginary.

In fact, Southland poultry farming growth (or ranching as it was often called in Los Angeles) stands as a paradigm for the change in capitalism that was notable between the period of Weeks’ one-acre idealism of the early twentieth century and the market concentration of the mid- to late-twentieth century. The markers of change are clear: Weeks began the century imagining an egalitarian economic self-sufficiency through small (2,500 hens or less) farm cooperation; by the time his Southland colony was populated in the late 1920s, he begrudgingly acknowledged, and chamber of commerce economists asserted, that more acreage and at least 2,500 hens would be necessary for “independence.”

Small poultry farming did proliferate in Southern California throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and there was even a “backyard” poultry dimension to the area’s burgeoning “backyard” farming movement.⁶⁵ This did not necessarily mean, however, that Californians had successfully transformed the nature of capitalism in local food production. By 1959, according to the U.S.

⁶⁴Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, “Agriculture . . . an Industry,” 6.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of backyard farming in the 1930s and 1940s see: Robert M. Carriker, *Urban Farming in the West: A New Deal Experiment in Subsistence Homesteads* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); See also “Small Farms Aid in Growth, New Living Mode Credited with Drawing Residents,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 1930. The article concludes that “the wide acceptance of a new mode of living, the small farm home, has played an important part in the remarkable increase in population in the rural sections of Los Angeles County during the last decade.” The idea that this type of rural-urban mode of living was suited to poultry farming (which required no irrigation) on very small acreage was being stimulated as early as 1910 when Mrs. A. Basley of Los Angeles wrote the 220 page *Western Poultry Book – with Questions and Answers Relative to Up to Date Poultry Culture* (Los Angeles: The Neuner Company Press, 1910). “How many chickens to keep on a city lot” highlighted Basley’s Question and Answer section and she provided instructions for lots as small as 50’ x 75’. Notably, Basley contends that the maximum number of chickens that could be housed effectively on 2 acres (twice the lot size of Charles Weeks’ “one acre and independence” strategy) would be 1,000 (page 183); less than one-half the number that Weeks would later calculate as being necessary for self-sufficiency. Backyard poultry farming in the city was supposed to supplement family income, not provide a living.

Department of Agriculture's report on the Los Angeles Egg Market, while there were two-thousand poultry ranches within seventy-five miles of Los Angeles that supplied nearly all the eggs in the regional market, almost none had less than two-thousand hens, several – capturing the bulk of the market – had more than one-hundred thousand egg producing hens. Weeks Colony farmers often brought their produce directly to market, or sold to small local distributors, but by the 1950s the market had evolved into a sophisticated wholesale sector of two-hundred seventy three firms, while only sixty-seven mega-distributors controlled eighty percent of the wholesale market.⁶⁶ If there was a brief window of opportunity for Southland capitalism to have supported a blended rural-urban ideal valorizing the small producer, it had evaporated by mid-century.

It is important to differentiate between the competing utopias that were acted out in Southern California. Bellamy, though he shared Charles Weeks' desire to merge city and rural cultures, would not have advocated for a commercial sector organized around "one acre and independence." Bellamy believed in a type of Taylorist utopia; the efficiency of centralized, large-scale production. I would argue that Bellamy might have imagined a concentrated industry, like egg farming had become in the 1960s, as being closer to a utopian future than was small production. In Bellamy's formulation, all that would be required to transform a highly concentrated industry from capitalism to cooperative socialism would be for the government to nationalize it. Paradoxically, it was not Bellamy's future, but the future of Charles Weeks that actually was looking backward; one acre and independence expressed a technologically modified yeoman farmer ideal – Bellamyism promoted an apparently more modern central-state administration. Both visions resonated in the complex and unorthodox Los Angeles imaginary.

⁶⁶ United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, *The Los Angeles Egg Market* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Marketing Economics Research Division, 1960), 9.

As I have argued in this study, the history of southland utopianism – selling Los Angeles as paradise – has always been based on an intricate interplay between communalism and capitalist individualism – neither approach to social order has ever been unfettered or free from the influence of the other. And even after the failure of Weeks’ colony in 1929, Angelenos did not entirely abandon their attempts to start new utopian colonies. Beyond the obvious connection between land and colony, unlike communities which intentionally isolated themselves from cities, the Los Angeles utopian alternatives maintained an intimate and essential relationship with the area’s real estate development industry and mainstream culture. Ultimately, this relationship benefited industry more than the intentional communities, but it helps to explain why utopian myth remains so much a part of the California dream.

That there was a strong mainstream dimension to California’s utopian myth also helps to explain the popular interest in Upton Sinclair’s bid for governorship in the 1934 elections, running on a platform he called End Poverty In California (EPIC). Sinclair ran as a socialist – an EPIC socialist – within the California Democratic Party, along with a full slate of EPIC candidates for other state offices. Sinclair’s platform, which he attempted to transform into a national political movement after he failed in the election, promoted a full complement of New Deal-type “cooperative” ventures in industry and government, but, at least in the beginning, EPIC advocated creating “state land colonies, whereby the unemployed may become self-sustaining and cease to be a burden upon the taxpayers.”⁶⁷ In fact, the very first point in Sinclair’s plan called for the creation of “a public body, the California Authority for Land (the CAL) [which] will take the idle land and land sold for taxes and at foreclosure sales, and erect dormitories, kitchens, cafeterias, and rooms for social purposes and cultivate the land, using

⁶⁷ “Plan to End Poverty Summarized in Detail,” *Upton Sinclair’s EPIC News*, (Vol. 1, No. 1) Los Angeles and San Francisco, California, December 26, 1933, page 4, Upton Sinclair Collection, Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

modern machinery under the guidance of experts.”⁶⁸ From the time of this first publication at the end of 1933 until Sinclair lost the election in November of 1934, at least one article a week promoted and explained in more detail the idea of agricultural and industrial colonies, which Sinclair promised to begin establishing when he became governor.

Certainly, Sinclair was building on an idea that had resonated in California for some time, and there is evidence that the area’s once influential Bellamy Clubs actually did still exist in Los Angeles, though they were low profile and only very occasionally mentioned in EPIC news stories.⁶⁹ One interesting reprint of a letter by the *EPIC News* editors, however, was from Edward Bellamy’s widow Emma, who sent a letter to a famous Long Beach clergyman, Dr. Henry Kendall Booth, imploring him to “add the weight of your influence to the electing of Upton Sinclair governor of California.” Perhaps less circumspect about religious discourse than her husband, Emma contended that “a militant clergy, alive to the evils of today, awake to the possibility of alleviating them and preaching the religion of Jesus Christ, which simply points straight to the solution, is the crying need of the hour. May all of you whose voices go forth from pulpits everywhere aid in establishing the new order according to the dictates of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁰

Mankind United and the Reciprocal Economy Foundation had been, in their forms, examples of corporatism as utopianism, (an idea that was easy to extract from Bellamyism) and in this they followed the tradition of Southern California dialogue between industry and utopia. Mankind United and EPIC capitalized on the area’s historic connections to radical political movements that had long since evaporated (such as Nationalism), but also on the unusual success

⁶⁸ “Plan to End Poverty,” 4.

⁶⁹ The September 2, 1935 edition of EPIC’s newspaper, newly renamed *Upton Sinclair’s National EPIC News*, advertises an “EPIC-Liberal Picnic Planned for Labor Day,” and invites “all liberals, Utopians, Bellamy Clubs and Union Labor Advocates,” imploring them to “have a large representation at the affair. Upton Sinclair’s National Epic News (Vol. 2, No. 15), September 2, 1935, page 1, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

⁷⁰ “Long Beach Pastor Urged to Join EPIC,” *Upton Sinclair’s EPIC News*, (Vol. 1, No. B) June 4, 1934, page 2, Upton Sinclair Collection, Box 4, Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Long Beach.

that more spiritual reform movements, like Theosophy, managed to garner in Southern California. Emma Bellamy's letter reflects the fact that in Los Angeles radicals could address a spiritual audience, but there was an even wider spiritual-political intersection than this.

In California, Boston, and New York, Theosophy and Nationalism had been aligned almost since the first publication of *Looking Backward*. Helen Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophy movement, often referred to the nearly contemporary *Looking Backward* in her text, *The Key to Theosophy*, arguing that "the organization of Society, depicted by Edward Bellamy, in his magnificent work '*Looking Backwards*,' [sic] admirably represents the Theosophical idea of what should be the first great step towards the full realization of universal brotherhood."⁷¹ One of the earliest records of at least an attempt to connect the two movements is a February 18, 1889 letter to Edward Bellamy from another of the founders of Theosophy, William Quan Judge.

Judge was the editor and proprietor of the Theosophical Society's monthly magazine, *The Path*, and in 1889 he wrote to Bellamy, offering that "theosophists may assist in the ethical advancement of the race, substituting brotherhood and cooperation for competition, and do good work on the practical plane. Hence I desire to popularize Nationalism."⁷² Judge offered Bellamy twenty-five dollars and eight pages an issue in his thirty-two page magazine to "write a tale" to the theme of brotherhood through Nationalism, because he had concluded (after the literary success of Bellamy's novel) that "a tale seems to me most likely to achieve the end desired, as its humor and vividness will appeal to many minds not otherwise to be reached." "Your writings," Judge concludes, "have proved invaluable in this respect and I hope you will be able to let me

⁷¹ Helen Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* 1889 (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, 2007) accessed online 7/23/2014 at <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/key/key-3.htm>.

⁷² Letter from William Quan Judge to Edward Bellamy, dated February 18, 1889, Edward Bellamy Collection, Hou B MS Am 1181, Box 2, Folder 269, Houghton Library Special Collections, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

have a story on the above lines for the April *Path*.⁷³ There is no record that Bellamy ever did write this article, but, especially in Boston and California, Bellamyism and Theosophy overlapped substantially.

Blavatsky, in fact, claimed credit for the success of the first Bellamy Clubs even in Bellamy's native area of Boston, asserting that Bellamyism was an example of Theosophists acting in the world to effect change. *The Key to Theosophy* was written in a question and answer, *apologia*, format. When the "Inquisitor" asked Blavatsky, "Then as a Theosophist you will take part in an effort to realize such an ideal? [awakening "brotherly feeling among nations"]", she replied, "Certainly; and we have proved it by action. Have not you heard of the Nationalist clubs and party which have sprung up in America since publication of Bellamy's book? They are now coming prominently to the front, and will do so more and more as time goes on. Well, these clubs and this party were started in the first instance by Theosophists. One of the first, the Nationalist Club of Boston, Mass, has Theosophists for President and Secretary, and the majority of its executives belong to the Theosophy Society." She went on to comment that in the clubs and party "the influence of Theosophy is plain, for they all take as their basis, their first and fundamental principle, the Brotherhood of Humanity as taught by Theosophy."⁷⁴

While Theosophists continued to form a large contingent of the membership in Bellamy clubs, especially in Boston and California, perhaps in part because Bellamy himself never embraced Theosophy as a movement (and, conversely, because many Nationalist Clubs had become even more political than Bellamy himself advocated), Judge began to distance himself from direct political endorsement or involvement when he took over the Society's leadership after Blavatsky's death. By the early twentieth century, Judge had reversed Blavatsky's public

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ H. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*.

assertion (and his own claim in the earlier letter to Bellamy) that Theosophy and Bellamyism were connected, commenting in his writings that “We have been asked why we do not join the Bellamyites and other cooperative societies? If you want to go in, go in. The Theosophical Society, as such, has nothing to do with it. I am perfectly happy to live where I am and do my duty where I stand, without any new law of property, or with it, whichever you please.”⁷⁵

The Theosophy movement underwent a schism in 1894, and Judge’s counterpart, Annie Besant, appears to have engaged in a discursive battle with Bellamy even before this, as early as 1892. It was, importantly enough, around the same issue Judge seems to have addressed later; whether Theosophists should engage in active reform programs. Bellamy interpreted Besant’s position to be critical of political action, and he responded with an editorial in *The New Nation*, entitled “We Trust this is not Sound Theosophy.” In December of 1892 Besant wrote a letter to the editor (Bellamy) of *The New Nation* condemning his interpretation of her words, insisting that “if you had cared to look at my writings instead of taking a few incomplete sentences from a newspaper interview, you would have seen that I have urged it as part of the Theosophic life that each should help forward any movement towards equality and brotherhood that he could aid, and that none should resign any form of useful activity save to take up one more important and difficult.” She concluded by chastising Bellamy with the lament that “I cannot but be sorry that your paper should show the same readiness to be unjust, as the capitalistic organs show towards socialists, though it only illustrates my position that the socialist form, without the true socialist spirit of justice and brotherliness, may be prolific of the old evils.”⁷⁶

The Theosophy Society’s newly found rigor to maintain the separation of church and politics was not something that concerned Alfred Bell and Mankind United forty years later.

⁷⁵ W. Q. Judge, *Echoes of the Orient: the Writings of William Quan Judge*, Volume II, compiled by Dara Ekland (Pasadena: Theosophical Society Press, 2011), 152.

⁷⁶ Annie Besant, “Letter From Mrs. Besant,” *The New Nation*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (January 7, 1893), 4.

Drawing from both Theosophy and Bellamyism, Bell's followers believed that ethical systems and practical social reform could progress together toward a new Southern California Utopia built from real estate holdings, donated capital, and Christ's Church of the Golden Rule. If it was the rule of law that stopped them, it only served as the latest example of Judge's theosophical position that the quest toward the brotherhood of humanity "has nothing to do with such trumpery and democratic things as legislation."⁷⁷

By the late twentieth century, the world would often see Southern California as a Mecca for odd spiritual cults and religions.⁷⁸ In terms of variety and scale this may be true, but what should not be forgotten is that this circumstance had come about, not because of some mutation of thought in California, but because the area had always maintained a dialogue between radicalism and the mainstream. If this did not make California a more radical place – and there is little evidence that it did – it certainly did make California a more diverse place. Still, mainstream discourse expanded and contracted continuously, but the geography retained a national reputation for entertaining conversations that were not tolerated very well elsewhere.

While on the political front such conversation narrowed during the second half of the twentieth century, it retained a fair amount of elasticity on the spiritual one. These radical-spiritual moments prepared a terrain where diversity – though not necessarily tolerance – was visible to Southern California's residents, visitors, and through music, motion pictures, and later television, to the rest of the world. In the next chapter we will explore the way idealized diversity first materialized in the Southland's architectural dreams and built environment.

⁷⁷ Judge, *Echoes of the Orient*, 153.

⁷⁸ In fact, this perception goes back to at least the early 1920s. Mike Gold spent 1923-24 in San Francisco and commented in a journal entry, "My dentist used to be a secretary of the I.W.W. miners' union at Goldfield, Nevada. He led a big strike. Now, after ten years in California, he produces ectoplasm and tells me he can project his body anywhere he wants to." *Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*, 162.

CHAPTER 5: TRIMMING AND FINISHING

“A worthy metropolitan city,” according to Scottish city planner Patrick Geddes, “has always been realized as a main national or imperial asset; and sometimes also, as in Athens of old and again today (and of course supremely in the case of Jerusalem), as a centre of racial unity, and accordingly of spiritual appeal, in ways far exceeding boundaries and frontiers.”¹ Los Angeles was not Athens or Jerusalem, but boosters and developers could imagine it to be so; and the similarity of climate, myths of genealogy, exclusiveness, and utopian wish fulfillment could connect Los Angeles to such revered, universal places. To materialize these august imaginaries, outer vestments would have to be designed to recall past grandeur. But Athens and Jerusalem were only two of the design inspirations. In Los Angeles, the work of designing town centers and suburbs, as Geddes pointed out with respect to Scotland and Ireland at the turn of the century, was not the sole province of capitalists.² In addition to recalling past civilizations, fragments of historical social relations and desired transformations littered the developing landscapes.

Still, as early as 1873, travel journalist Charles Nordhoff insisted that, “Los Angeles has many of the signs of a prosperous business centre; it has excellent shops, and a number of well-built residences.”³ As to homes, according to Nordhoff, “the dwelling is a secondary matter here, and it results that many people are satisfied to live in very small and slight homes.”⁴ Nordhoff, in this period just before the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce was founded, was a national booster for the area; his travel books sold well, and his descriptions of what he saw, and

¹ Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915), 228.

² Geddes, “The Housing Movement,” in *Cities in Evolution*, 144-160.

³ Charles Nordhoff, *California: for Health, Pleasure, and Residence*, 1873 (U.S.A.: Ten Speed Press, 1973), 137.

⁴ *ibid.*, 139.

the climate he experienced, helped to attract new residents right at a time when the under-construction Los Angeles railway terminus was going to reduce the cost of immigration to the Southland. As much as railway technology would stimulate growth, it is clear that booster imagination – and the revolution in book-printing and paper technologies – also were necessary to make Los Angeles into the home-ownership paradise new residents wanted it to be.

Home ownership – single-family home ownership – was the ideal boosters promoted to attract the right kind of immigrants to the region. Already by 1910 boosters who had organized within the League of California Municipalities knew that this ideal for home construction would require planning. They set the date for the area’s first City Planning Conference: November, 14, 15, and 16. “No city, however small,” they said, “can afford to neglect to plan definitely for its enlargement along proper lines. In the southwest it is possible to develop a distinctive type of city. We love the open air and sunshine, the broad spaces, the flowers and fruits, and mission style of architecture. The closely built up city is not to our liking. We wish to ruralize the city and forever bar the tenement house.” The elaborate prospectus for this first planning conference in California (and only the third in the entire nation) concluded with the matter-of-fact observation that “Garden villages are better than slums.”⁵ There were, of course, other types of housing that people liked – that people could better afford – and there was some distance between garden village and slum – but, as it had been for thirty years, this was the pitch; this was the imaginary place.

The League of California Municipalities’ imaginary households were, in fact, nearly indistinguishable from Gaylord Wilshire’s socialist vision of the cooperative commonwealth. Wilshire also promoted the dream of individual home ownership, declaring that in Los Angeles’s socialist future, “Each worker will, if he wish, live in his own cottage in the green fields, miles

⁵ *Pacific Municipalities: a Journal for Progressive Cities*, Volume XXIII, Number 2 (September 30, 1910): 47.

from his work, for transportation will be so rapid, so pleasant and so cheap that he will have no reason to crowd into the tenements of a city.”⁶ Wilshire’s was a socialism constructed from Bellamy’s literary inventions – and it contained within it enough individualism to align with the mainstream imagination that drove city planners to promote Los Angeles as paradise. Wilshire was not opposed to such hyperbole, insisting that “no small and cramped ideal can serve humanity for any great upward step.”⁷ The way Angelenos imagined place was by all accounts no small and cramped ideal.

While the inseparability of place and imagination can be recalled in the recovered images of Los Angeles places that were never built, which the present study illuminated in chapter one, this connection truly comes to life in the structures that were materialized. And since its beginnings, the quintessential example of the imaginary place descending into the material world is the private residence; the house. The form that the home takes – home styles – for example, are much more than arbitrary reflections of individual taste. They are, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Edward Bellamy argued, the center of social relations, and in Los Angeles they are the material manifestations of a mythic narrative about Southern California’s potential to generate new ways of living.

If the collective picture of hundreds of thousands of houses, perceived from a mythical bird’s-eye view, is the image most identified with the façade of Los Angeles, it is useful to unpack the meaning that these artifacts contain. Even the way that many of California’s cities locate homes – the organization of residential zones, commercial areas, and “green spaces,” has been heavily influenced by the way that influential planners and builders interpreted Edward Bellamy’s utopian ideas. The League alluded to “garden villages,” and it is true that many

⁶ Gaylord Wilshire, “The Significance of the Trust,” *Wilshire Editorials* (New York: Wilshire Book Company, 1906), 31.

⁷ *ibid.*, 30.

Southern California town plans were inspired by the founder of the English Garden Cities Movement, Ebenezer Howard. For his part, Howard always acknowledged that his ideas about space were “born of an enthusiastic reading of the American Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* and from his subsequent decision to test the practicality of Bellamy’s cooperative principles in action.”⁸

While city planning ideals illustrate Bellamy’s influence on community builders in the public sector, newspaper stories about buildings illustrate the range of private projects that claimed Bellamy’s ideas as their inspiration. In this regard, California’s Bellamyism was part of a national dialogue. In fact, an *Omaha Bee* article republished in *The New York Times* on Nov 16, 1890, is called “A Bellamy Apartment House” and reveals that a twenty-five unit cooperative building will be constructed where “all of the cooking will be done in one kitchen, each individual sharing his or her expense.”⁹ Bearing in mind that this was not an entirely new idea (apartment-hotels operated this way), it was perceived to be new as a solution for mass housing, and so closely associated with *Looking Backward* that from this point forward the architectural concept would carry the author’s name.

This new trend in housing demonstrated that early on the idea of “cooperation” went beyond utopian settlements and had begun to offer an alternative lifestyle in mainstream society. Yet it is clear that this was also good capitalism; astute developers quickly grasped the idea that cooperation was a unique new way to pre-sell multi-unit apartment buildings, and that it could be marketed to take advantage of what sociologists were beginning to perceive as the consumer-power of women.

⁸ Dugald Macfadyen, Sr., *Ebenezer Howard and Town Planning* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,), 20-21, quoted in *The American Planner: Biographies and Recollections*, ed. by Donald Krueckelberg (New York: Methuen, 1983).

⁹ “A Bellamy Apartment House,” in the *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 1890, reprinted from the *Omaha Bee*. Accessed via <http://proquest.umi.com>, on December 20, 2010.

Bellamy's ideas did generate an unusual amount of traction among architects and urban planners, and the Boston architect J. Pickering Putnam even published a treatise called *Architecture under Nationalism*, in which he asserted that “dwellings, built as is now customary in the United States in the form of isolated ‘towers,’ cost us from two to four times as much as equal accommodations would cost built in the form of ‘flats’ in a properly constructed apartment house.”¹⁰ Putnam went on to describe the idea of a cooperative-apartment, though he does acknowledge that “in this material age, we may appropriately consider the material advantages first and the intellectual and moral ones afterwards.”¹¹ Putnam's work helps to contextualize the “Bellamy Apartment House” and confirms that “cooperation” could be a “vital spark driving consumer trends.”¹² This less vertical “Nationalist” architecture also brings to mind Los Angeles' well-known building-height limit ordinances, which may have been created to manage the risks of natural disasters, but invariably created a different kind of city aesthetic and led to the type of cityscape Nationalist architects were striving to create. And to those who resisted the city congestion and density that vertical populations brought – flats and miniature not-so-high rises were the types of residential structures that were preferred.

Throughout the nation socially conscious and practical designers and builders had been complaining for decades that “the tendency of building, with regard to this class of dwellings [apartments], is toward extremes; that apartments are either so large and so elaborately finished and decorated, as to rent for nearly or quite as [much as] separate houses, or else that they are little better than the better class of tenement house.”¹³ As early as 1886, C.C. Edgerton had noted that apartments were not really designed – in terms of price and accommodation – for the very

¹⁰ J. Pickering Putnam, *Architecture under Nationalism* (Boston: The Nationalist Educational Association, 1890), 11.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 2.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ C.C. Edgerton, “Apartment Houses,” *The Decorator and Furnisher*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (July 1886): 108.

people who needed them; people “of good breeding and only moderate means” who were beginning to predominate in the nation’s rapidly growing cities. Edgerton proposed apartments with small, compact rooms, “calculated for comfort, not show.”¹⁴ Even if Bellamy did not read *The Decorator and Furnisher*, his futuristic apartment proposals would assume a similar aesthetic and practical design.

Bellamyite design could also foreground the tension between local California interests and modernism. A clear example of this is the Kaweah Cooperative Commonwealth in central California. When the U.S. Congress passed legislation designating an area of Sierra redwoods a National Park, it disrupted the activities of an industrious group of Bellamyites, who had been applying for and receiving land patents within the area of the park, and had consolidated them to form a utopian colony – the Kaweah Co-operative Society. The colony’s “mode of operations,” according to a *New York Times* article published on July 25, 1891, “is modeled after the theories of Edward Bellamy.” The *Times* reporter explains the events of the week, noting that “some of the colonists had secured patents to sections of land while others had made entries to lands.” The situation escalated at this point, and “on July 1 the Government stationed a force of troops on the reservation for the purpose of preventing further cutting of the timber by the colonists, but it appears that the people are not obeying their orders.”¹⁵ Paradoxically, followers of the central tenet of Nationalism, which advocated government ownership of all industry, were in this instance opposed to the government’s centralization of control over natural resources.

In other situations Bellamyism often had been used by California’s city builders to justify conservation (as exemplified in Ebenezer Howard’s promotion of green cities), but here in the case of Kaweah, modernity and progress outweighed the perceived social value of the ancient

¹⁴ Edgerton, 108.

¹⁵ “The Big Tree Groves,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1891, accessed December 20, 2010 at <http://proquest.hm.com>.

redwoods (at least in the minds of the Bellamyites who had selected home sites among these same redwoods). Bellamy's personal ambivalence about modernization provided ample space for his followers to locate divergent points at which the compromise between nature and modernity could intersect, especially in everyday life.

Still, in Los Angeles nature and home-building were entwined even during periods of high growth. Such connections were artifacts of the unique blending of rural and urban characteristics that Angelenos valorized and attempted to retain when the metropolitan area expanded. In 1913, for example, one of the Los Angeles area's most successful and prominent seed and garden suppliers, the Germain Seed and Plant Company, which had been in business since 1871, began to promote what could have been one of the most unusual vertical integrations attempted by any business before corporate conglomeration became common in the 1960s. Germain Seed and Plant already supplied a full range of houseplant, garden, orchard, and farm supplies, including vegetable and fruit seeds for every conceivable plant, ornamental and productive trees, and even poultry farming supplies. In fact, their mail order catalogue totaled one-hundred twenty pages. But in 1913 the company decided to make money from the soil in which customers cultivated their seeds and plants: Germain became a real estate brokerage.

Germain's management insisted that "owing to the ever increasing number of inquiries received from our new customers, investors, farmers, ranchers, homeseekers and others, for farm lands of all kinds, citrus groves, etc., we have established a new department to cover this demand, and to further our seed and plant business by forming, at the outset, favorable business relations with homeseekers from all over the world who may be desirous of purchasing agricultural and other lands."¹⁶ It is remarkable that a seller whose business profits were generated from what could be characterized, in relation to land, as an aftermarket product would

¹⁶ Catalogue, *Germain Seed and Plant Company* (Los Angeles: Germain Seed and Plant Company, 1913), 7.

conjure up a business idea that bundled seeds with homes; but this strategy was a wonderful metaphor symbolizing what boosters and newcomers imagined could be possible in Los Angeles. Teach a man to sew a seed and you can sell a man his home – even in the city. Germain’s new affiliated business, The Germain Farm Lands Company, would bend the concept of real estate sales, but also, through its unique product bundle, confirm the reality of Los Angeles as a rural-city; literally a garden city.

The desire to intersect rural and urban lifeways at the locations of peoples’ homes was not unique to Los Angeles – certainly not even unique to the United States. Raymond Williams observed this same momentum in England, which he concluded was a result of that nation’s urban population having exceeded its rural one for the first time by the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Williams saw connections between the material disruption caused by urbanization and the development of nineteenth-century literature, noting that in spite of the disproportionately large influence of the emerging city experience, much of the important literature (in England) “was still of the country and the small town.”¹⁸ Only Dickens and Gaskell, Williams contends, were able to realistically portray what he calls “the paradoxes of city experience.”¹⁹ In American city literature, writers like Dreiser, Anderson, and Sinclair realistically exposed the potential for urban degradation, but the utopian responses from Edward Bellamy and his followers mediated that reality by predicting a popular mastery of the city through the retention of small town virtues. By imbuing these virtues in individual homes and land, Angeleno promoters brought literary reality into everyday life.²⁰

¹⁷ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, 217.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 219.

²⁰ See Deborah Berke, “Thoughts on the Everyday,” *Architecture of the Everyday*, Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, eds. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 226, for a discussion of the way that literature mediates the popular concepts of home. Still, Dolores Hayden points out that “architecture can’t bring about

Certainly the literary myths contouring Southland space were evident to the eye: tiny fantasy homes made of faux stone and sporting non-utilitarian spires demonstrated that every Angeleno could own a castle; Spanish colonial imitations with grand courtyards opening up to drainage covers and heavily trafficked streets kept the valor of the *hacienda* alive; adobes and moderns with glass-laden atriums brought nature and the built world together – the myth of the rural city embodied. That these styles all flourished in Los Angeles is concomitantly utopian and anti-utopian, for while modern utopian thought does emphasize experimentation that pushes capitalism’s boundaries in all conceivable directions simultaneously (a condition these varied homes seem to meet), the nineteenth-century utopian literature L.A.’s developers admired prefers a higher degree of homogeneity – a human nature that is satisfied with equality maintained by self-enforced limitations.

Furthermore, diversity in Los Angeles is reinforced by another cultural form that is tied to Southland geography in a somewhat exceptional way – movies. As historian Merry Ovnick has pointed out, it was the early Hollywood film industry – silent films – that most influenced the diversity of fantasy home styles proliferating in Southern California.²¹ Ovnick’s work affirms the range of causes historians contend influenced housing styles, but also maintains that “the wave of fantasy and period-revival houses that sprang up nationwide in urban areas and automobile suburbs between 1919 and the onset of the Great Depression” was due to film imagery.²² There is most certainly an indistinct boundary between Hollywood sets and Los Angeles streets – this observation was portrayed poignantly by Nathaniel West in *Day of the Locust*, and can be observed in such diverse places as the Wilshire Boulevard Temple’s interior wall murals, which

revolution; spatial change by itself can’t effect social change.” See Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 205.

²¹ Merry Ovnick, “The Mark of Zorro: Silent Film’s Impact on 1920s Architecture in Los Angeles,” *California History*, Vo. 86, No. (2008): 28-59, 61-64.

²² *ibid.*, 29.

were painted by Hollywood set designers in the 1930s (in a notably constructivist style), and the long gone tourist area of “China City” that actually was built from discarded movie sets. This point is well taken, but I would argue that Hollywood films were able to mark the Southland so readily and in such a profound way because the vernacular of Los Angeles was used to considering myth to be part of routine everyday life.

In fact, by 1911, only a year after silent film makers decided to relocate to Los Angeles, the city was already well known for its flamboyant fiction-inspired housing forms. In its February issue, which carried several lengthy articles about neighborhoods and housing on the Pacific Coast, the Philadelphia magazine *Suburban Life* attempted to contextualize what it called “characteristic California style,” noting that “copies of Ramona’s adobe, Anne Hathaway’s cottage, William Tell’s mountain dwelling, or Diomed’s Pompeian villa, are easily found” in the greater Los Angeles area.²³ Styles related to the “more democratic” bungalow (as the columnists of *Suburban Life* described it) were more prolific, but exceptional individualism always dotted the landscape.

If architecture owed the most ornate edges of its popular forms to the motion picture industry, both that industry and the objects that architects would design were riddled with political ideas and meaning that originated elsewhere. Historian Lary May contends that Hollywood, like Los Angeles itself, was boosted into existence by promoters who astutely recognized meaning and opportunity even in a location that lacked the traditional markers of economic modernity – like urbanism and industrialization.²⁴ It is most likely, then, that the motion picture industry’s growth in Los Angeles and Angeleno assimilation of the Hollywood

²³ Mabel Urmy Seares, “Developing a Characteristic California Style: the Evolution of the Bungalow and the Chalet,” *Suburban Life*, Volume XII, No. 2 (February, 1911): 97.

²⁴ Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: the Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 180.

imaginary were mutually constituted; if the Los Angeles form owed a debt to films, the emerging position of film as mass culture owed its very existence to the tendency of Southlanders to consider fiction and non-fiction as equally important milestones on a continuous narrative road.²⁵

Just after the film industry gained its foothold in Los Angeles, *The Ladies' Home Journal* published a sixty-eight page catalogue of bungalow photographs and plans that “ladies” should admire. The catalogue opens with an epigraph, “He who deliberately builds an ugly house condemns himself as a poor citizen, while he who builds a beautiful house proves himself a good citizen, for his personal effort contributes to the public welfare.”²⁶ *Journal* editors, then, equated the ability to maintain a proper home with citizenship and public welfare, implying that those without appropriate homes were neither acting in the public interest nor qualified to be citizens. Bellamy would have agreed with the conclusion, though he would have insisted that it was the duty of the state to provide proper and beautiful homes for all citizens, not the duty of the individual to compete for a better home. Gaylord Wilshire also conflated the individual’s dream of home improvement with the actualization of a better society, declaring that “the task of the man who sets out to beautify his environment can be ended only when all the world is beautified.”²⁷ Allegorically, improving home architecture could, and did to radicals like Bellamy and Wilshire, represent improving the architecture of society – the task for which socialism was best suited.

²⁵ Notably, even as late as 1921 *Variety* magazine (which did concentrate more on theater than film at the time) carried very little entertainment news from the West Coast and observed that “Los Angeles is far from being a haven for the picture folk, whether they be author, actor or director. And it is pretty generally conceded it is a good place to keep away from.” No Byline, “Most Studios At Standstill, Coast Actors ‘Free Lancing,’” *Variety*, Vol. I.XI, No. 8 (January 14, 1921). By 1925, however this had changed, with Los Angeles-based productions beginning to achieve equal billing with those in New York and Chicago.

²⁶ Anonymous, *Journal Bungalows* (Philadelphia: Ladies Home Journal, n.d. [circa 1911]).

²⁷ Wilshire, “What is Religion,” *Wilshire Editorials*, 362.

Probably all Bellamyites, but Southern Californians in particular, quickly grasped the importance of architecture, since it could be, as Wilshire observed, the outward expression of the cooperative commonwealth. This is in itself an important divergence from the relationship between power and design that historically had dominated civilization. Cultural scholar Vincent P. Pecora points out that “for most of its history, architecture has been a profession dependent on close ties to wealth and power, even in realizing its minor dreams.”²⁸ Los Angeles’ example of the Bradbury Building does not break this paradigm, for the Nationalist architect George H. Wyman did design and build his utopian edifice under contract to Louis Bradbury, one of the city’s richest citizens, but he did appropriate the “practical interests of the patron” to bring into existence something that proffered a new society – maybe one building to begin replacing the nation’s typical capitalist structures.²⁹

Pecora develops a concept that is important to understanding how utopian literature has provided a design – even if only for a single building – that is capable of overturning social order, ideologically and materially. He contends that “architecture, precisely because of its intimate ties with wealth and power, easily becomes the perfect expression of the collapse of all ideology into things themselves – the service of and resistance to social power prove to be indistinguishable and interchangeable.”³⁰ If this negotiation was difficult to realize in other locales, it fit the terrain of Los Angeles perfectly, where ideological boundaries were always porous. The very prominence and “naming” of the bungalow itself conjured booster connections to the Anglo-colonized tropics at a time when the new settlements of Southern California were

²⁸ Vincent P. Pecora, “Towers of Babel,” *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture*, ed. by Diane Ghirardo, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 46.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*

busily attracting the right kind of population.³¹ Architecture, then, served to actualize in the real world the negotiation between radicalism and mainstream that weaved its way through social and political discourse in Southern California. “Because architectural form crystallizes, becomes visible, is subject to the test of constant use,” according to Lewis Mumford, “it endows with special significance the impulses and ideas that shape it: it externalizes the living beliefs, and in doing so, reveals latent relationships.”³² Architecture and Nationalism, consequently, were during the brief heyday of the movement, natural allies. Los Angeles, because it had fewer physical structures to eradicate than typical eastern American cities, could use architecture in a more radical way to recreate its worldview.

The Bradbury building is the most straight forward example of this because its designer wrote explicitly about the source of his inspiration, but other parts of the built environment in Southern California also exemplified the transformative role of architecture. Fantasy housing, which for many people epitomizes the image of the typical home in California, is much more than either an expression of real estate radicalism or a contrived form of physical boosterism aimed at reinforcing the promotional myths promising a better everyday life. Because of the architect’s relationship with powerful developers, it can express the ideas of both radical and conventional constituencies. So, for example, if the faux Swiss chalet cottage in the Hollywood Hills, or the Medieval castle in Laurel Canyon does help to promote the booster-driven idea that California can be a paradise where every white man can live in luxury, it also impresses a degree of diversity and non-conformity on the landscape and begins to expand tolerance to physical

³¹ See Harold Kirker, *California’s Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973), 126-129. Kirker asserts (page 127) that California’s bungalow development was the “result of the oriental craze growing out of the uncertainty of western propagandists and designers as to what constituted the state’s colonial heritage.” The term itself, according to Kirker, is an Anglicized version of the word “Bengali” and refers specifically to thatched houses that were built from Indian service tents used by British colonial administrators. Kirker associates the origins of the California bungalow with an 1888 design by A.W. Putnam (page 128).

³² Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, Vol. I (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1938), 403.

difference. Such contradictions reinforce capitalist individualism, belying the homogeneity that utopia demands, but at the same time move to overthrow a stable vision of capitalist culture.

Still, if Polynesian huts, dreamlike Fairyland structures, Cotswold Cottages, Gothics, and Neo-Spanish Colonials demonstrated that even the most obscure and flighty aesthetic tastes could be accommodated in a modern city, there were other architectural forms that brought the ideas of intentional community directly onto neighborhood blocks; these were courtyard cottages, bungalows, and apartments. While in metropolitan New York apartments had been in vogue since the 1880s, where they were a good solution to the city's density requirements and supported the burgeoning population of single women in the workforce, in Los Angeles this form of home living belied the image of a more rural place where everyone could own a home.³³ Ironically, for apartments to become acceptable in Los Angeles they would need to express an imaginary that connected them not to the more practical aspects of housing that people needed, but to the more mythological aspects of regional narrative that helped form self-identity.

Bungalows, on the other hand, fit the California home ownership dream more neatly.³⁴ In the Little Landers' Tujunga colony, for example, bungalows and utopia had a direct and intertwined relationship. Tujunga's Wizard of Oz, Marshall Hartranft, did not merely sell undeveloped land; through one of the many corporations he controlled, the California Home Extension Association, he managed the look and feel of the community. Houses had to fit the social philosophy of the colony: individual variation was available, but class conformity was encouraged. While Charles Weeks marketed pre-fabricated farm businesses in order to construct

³³ See Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 142-149 for a discussion of the connection between the "bachelor girl" of the 1890s and the boom of Manhattan apartments in the 1880s.

³⁴ This also explains why many Los Angeles apartment buildings – even multistory structures – imitated the bungalow style externally, sporting faux-thatched hip roofs and copying the exterior trims and colors of California bungalow homes.

equality, Hartranft presented an array of beautiful egalitarian bungalows that could be purchased for as little as one-thousand dollars.

The bungalow itself, a nearly ubiquitous California building design, bears consideration as the embodiment of a utopian ideal. First, Hartranft's marketing material pointed out that these bungalows were "homes, not houses," and their "artistic features-labor saving arrangements and inexpensiveness" were (like Bellamy's reconfiguration of the domestic sphere) intended to make women's work easier.³⁵ In fact, while Tujunga's utopian real estate brokers seemed gender-neutral when they sold prospects on the benefits of socialism and geography, the bungalows themselves unquestionably were being marketed directly to women.

Real estate promotions emphasized that "while Southern California is noted for the beauty of its architecture and its delightful economies of housework as well as construction cost, the woman of true California spirit has her heart set upon a home place first and the house is the least important and the least expensive of it all." The bungalow might be small, but in light of the garden and health benefits of its styling and location, women would not, or so the marketing message said, "hold onto the senseless custom of building great structures of unnecessary size, cost, and labor upkeep."³⁶ Bungalows did not eliminate kitchens, as Bellamy would have preferred (because in Bellamy's utopia central restaurants replaced home-cooking), but they did "supplant the large style [kitchen] of years ago," replacing it with what was called a "buffet kitchen."³⁷ Bedrooms were limited, but the utopian bungalow did sport "the screened sleeping porch with folding wall beds, affording perfect health and rest in the pure balmy air as well as economy of house space and cost." Southern California climate enabled year-round utopia.

³⁵ Hartranft, *Western Empire*, 28.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

Most tellingly in terms of its gendered message, marketing bungalows for utopian colonies concluded by reminding readers that there was “one more step in the development: Mother buys a pair of top boots, a divided Khaki suit – she starts out to the far corner of the garden to help the boys or father get in the last of the second crop of potatoes. She may have been a pale, nervous wreck from housework in the illy [sic] ventilated house back East,” but, the brochure insisted, “she’s a Western woman now.”³⁸ Whether Western women preferred small houses is arguable, and whether they had less work to do in the west is doubtful, but size, cost, and aesthetic similarity was necessary to engage in the proper appearance of utopia, and this the California bungalow suited perfectly. Still, utopian developers’ gendered marketing did not really move discourse beyond conventional separate spheres. The home had always been the center of the domestic sphere and, hence, viewed as feminine; extending the role of women to potato harvesting was not a revolutionary role extension, but reversion to a feudal and colonial conception of the subsistence garden as a part of the home. Targeting such opportunities directly toward women merely acknowledged what fin de siècle advertisers had learned; women played an influential role in determining the nature of family consumption.

Outside the utopian colony, bungalows could offer the aura of rural comfort without the occupation of farming. In 1909, for example, the sublime, heavily wooded terrain of Laurel Canyon actually assimilated all the imagined characteristics of the rural-city and the affordable bungalow when the Charles S. Mann real estate developers opened the new subdivision of “Bungalow-Land.” Located near Hollywood in what developers described as “a beautiful location among oaks nearly a century old,” lots could be purchased for \$200 and up, and “artistic homes” for a minimum investment of \$1,200. Still, Bungalow-Land was not targeting cooperatives or individual socialists, but only “people of a high plane of living, of thought, and

³⁸ Hartranft, *Western Empires*, 28.

of conduct,” and those who were “appreciative of the naturally beautiful.”³⁹ In fact, Bungalow-Land made a point of telling readers that it was “not an experiment but an assured success.” No speculative utopian colony in Laurel Canyon; just typical capitalist housing with a “magnificent view of Los Angeles, the coast line, the Cahuenga valley, the oil fields, Catalina, Venice and even the San Fernando Valley.” One could see or at least imagine the entire terrain of Los Angeles from this rare, but affordable, city-canyon.

Bungalows, with their efficiency kitchens and sleeping verandas, could clearly appeal to a broad class of Angelenos, and they did retain the feeling of mass affordability and progressiveness. In 1910, bungalows were being offered in downtown Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Investment Company, which billed itself as “the largest co-operative building company in the world.”⁴⁰ Houses and lots ranged in price from \$2,925 for five-room bungalows to \$5,700 for an eight-room home. The company’s bungalows were “modern in every detail,” including “beamed ceiling, paneled walls, hardwood floors, built-in bookcases, window seats, leaded glass buffet, cabinet kitchen, etc.”⁴¹ The Burck-Gwynn Company called their development “Bungalow Dreamland,” and it was designed to fulfill the dream that everyone (white) could own a home in Los Angeles.⁴²

Los Angeles pioneered the bungalow style, but as the testimonials E.W. Stillwell & Co. printed in its 1915 housing brochure are meant to convey, the style was being emulated throughout the country. S.F. Lloyd of Evansville, Illinois attested that, “I have become thoroughly convinced that the bungalow is just as practical in a cold climate as it is in a warmer climate.” Just a few years before this, according to the company, “the word bungalow was an

³⁹ Advertisement, “Bungalow-Land,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 36, Number 213, May 2, 1909, 7.

⁴⁰ Advertisement, “Bungalows, New, Modern and Strictly Down to Date,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 37, Number 272, June 30, 1910, 15.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Advertisement, “Bungalow Dreamland,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 36, Number 73, December 13, 1908, 10.

unknown word to the American people outside the state.” Eastern architects acknowledged that architectural ideas from California were prevailing throughout the country, but Stillwell & Co. still admonished its readers and potential customers that “the so-called Eastern bungalows lose much of their identity and characteristic charm. If you want a real bungalow,” Stillwell insisted, “you should procure a set of Stillwell plans.”⁴³

Of course, what Angelenos portrayed as a real bungalow might be somewhat different than what people from other places could perceive; as a case in point, by page twenty one of E.W. Stillwell’s seventy-two page plan book, plan no. W-821 had diverged from typical egalitarian bungalow style to offer what one Eastern builder described as “the most aristocratic little house he ever saw.” Stillwell conceded that “it cannot be called a bungalow, strictly speaking, [but] neither is it ordinary cottage style.”⁴⁴ It called for a full basement, brick work around the porches, cemented block walls up to the joist, a shingled roof, and ornate roof ornaments. At \$3,200 it was a tiny six-room mansion with plenty of opportunity to customize a compromise between egalitarian box and individualized manor.

The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce declared that “Los Angeles has an all-year-round climate unsurpassed by that of any spot on earth,”⁴⁵ but while insisting that “sunshine is both a germicide and nerve tonic,” E.W. Stillwell wanted to be sure their housing market was not confined to the territory with the world’s best weather. Noting that the bungalows it built all offered “the large window area which is characteristic of so many California homes,” company marketers insisted that these giant panes of glass might be desirable regardless of climate. “The beautiful homes of California,” Stillwell concluded, “are a natural byproduct of the Pacific

⁴³E.W. Stillwell, *West Coast Bungalows*, 21.

⁴⁴.ibid.

⁴⁵ Brochure, *You Should Know* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1909), Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, Box 87, Folder 4, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

Coast.”⁴⁶ The *Bluebook of California Bungalows*, published in 1908 by the California Bungalow Company conveyed the same message, categorizing its homes as “artistic and cozy houses designed to meet the ever growing demand for popular homes, combining the maximum comfort, convenience and economy.” The planning, technology, and building systems this company used to construct its “ideal homes” were billed as “the giants of the modern business world,” and were designed to “leaven all economic disturbances.”⁴⁷

In these promotional pamphlets illustrating California’s unique take on “middling houses,” designs emphasized the utopian qualities of the region’s climate, access to high quality building materials, skilled labor, and well thought out plans. If planning was not always discernible at the community level, it was explicitly visible at the household level, where thousands of pages of blueprints and plans were available to the prospective builder or homeowner. “Do not make the great mistake,” declared Henry Menken of the Bungalowcraft Company, “of attempting to build from a picture book without a plan.”⁴⁸

There were even more explicit representations of utopia in Los Angeles homes. In fact, The Bradbury Building’s architect, George H. Wyman, designed at least four homes in the Los Angeles area, including a ten-room dwelling on Beacon Street near Tenth, projected to cost \$3,500 in 1896 – a sizeable housing investment for the times.⁴⁹ Wyman seems to have designed several additional houses that same year, all in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 price range. None still exist, and the style of only one is described – a colonial with no obvious Bellamyite features noted (though Wyman may have secreted some subtle ones in the design). Wyman’s reputation soared after he was lauded for the “most pleasing harmony of massiveness and symmetry” of the

⁴⁶ E.W. Stillwell, 31.

⁴⁷ *The Blue Book of Model California Bungalows* (Los Angeles: California Bungalow Company, 1908), 2.

⁴⁸ Henry Menken, *Model and Modern Bungalow Plans* (Los Angeles: Bungalowcraft Company, 1911), 2.

⁴⁹ “Real Estate and Building Permits Issued by the City Superintendent,” *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 25, Number 267, June 25, 1896.

Bradbury; in 1896 he also contracted to plan a one-story electric power-house for the Los Angeles Traction Company, and in 1909 prepared the plans for a forty-six room brick and concrete tenement on West Third Street in Los Angeles.⁵⁰ Of course it is impossible to know if the architectural elements of Nationalism remained in Wyman's portfolio, but it is significant that, just as Bellamy's politics incubated many of the twentieth century's leading socialists, his utopianism seems to have launched the careers of more than one important Los Angeles architect. Later in the century Frank Lloyd Wright's, Rudolph Schindler's, and Richard Neutra's modernist designs also would recall principles that Bellamy presented in his positive future. Los Angeles was a place where utopian space seemed to make sense.

Courtyard housing, for example, while representing one of the oldest and most transnational forms of development,⁵¹ takes its own unique forms in Los Angeles. The authors of one of the few studies attempting to theorize these structures as they manifested specifically in the Southland, entitled *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*, contend that the city's cottages are unique for two reasons: first, "they were generated in response to ideal as well as pragmatic demands about the nature of the house, housing, and the city"; and second, because they incorporated "the ability to dream and to shape life and place out of a virtual physical and spiritual void."⁵² I will argue, of course, that courtyard houses were not developed out of a "physical and spiritual void," but, rather, from a dynamic and explicit blueprint of literary ideals that had been informing housing construction in Los Angeles for more than thirty years before courtyards took hold in the early 1920s.

⁵⁰ In 1909 the terms "apartment" and "tenement" were still used interchangeably and it is likely that this building, even if it did not include specific Bellamyite design elements, was intended to meet the housing needs of middle class people.

⁵¹ Brian Edwards, Magda Sibley, Mohamad Hakmi, and Peter Land, eds., *Courtyard Housing: Past, Present & Future* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 21.

⁵² Stefanos Polyzoides, Roger Sherwood, James Tice, and Julius Shulman, *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles: a Typological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 4.

Courtyard cottages departed from the traditional rugged individualist form of Los Angeles single-family housing: they were multifamily units that created little opportunity for class or social distinctions. They provided, as most architectural historians point out, opportunities for social interaction – neighborhood building and garden settings on an otherwise urban block. Even the variations of courtyard dwellings that were configured nominally as single-family homes (e.g. no common walls with other units) were located on lots in orientations producing a common courtyard – the appearance of a housing community built on the periphery of a central park or garden area. Scholars propose that beginning in the late 1880s this style became particularly attractive to Angelenos because it “focuses on the development of urban space as a positive element.”⁵³ These attributes fit well with the invention of the rural-city and the valorization of city morality that boosters and Social Gospel leaders promoted and utopians colonized.

Pasadena, the home base of Upton Sinclair, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Kate Crane Gartz, was and still is particularly notable for the explicit ideals imbedded in the courtyards constructed there.⁵⁴ A sales brochure for the La Casa Torre units, completed in 1924 in a combined Spanish, Moorish, and Italian style, emphasized that “each one of these homes is as distinctive and unusual as the home you would select if purchasing. Each has features to appeal to the needs and tastes of the individual family.”⁵⁵ The West California Street Residence Apartments noted the same: “While one roof covers the entire group of houses, the apartments

⁵³ Polyzoides, et. al., 55.

⁵⁴ Most architectural historians contend that the first courtyard cottage in America was designed and built in Pasadena by Sylvanus Marston – the St. Francis in 1909. Todd Gish contests this, asserting that courtyard cottages grew out of existing building vernacular. See Todd Gish, “Bungalow Court Housing in Los Angeles, 1900—1930: Top Down Innovation or Bottom Up Reform,” *Southern Californian Quarterly*, Vol 91, No. 4 (Winter 2009/2010): 365-367.

⁵⁵ La Casa Torre real estate brochure, reprinted in *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*, 162.

have the characteristics of private homes.”⁵⁶ Again, this private-public intersection was the material expression of the social negotiation between capitalism and socialism that employed utopian ideas to design appropriate compromises.

Conventional scholarship generally has emphasized the relationship between the tourist industry and the development of apartment complexes, rather than the idealistic dimension of the apartment form. This narrative posits that apartments, cooperatives, and high-end apartment-hotels developed to serve transient or partial-year residents. Undoubtedly this was one of the demand-drivers for multi-unit building, but, as Todd Gish notes, “two discourses emerged in and about Los Angeles in the heady booster period between 1900 and the 1930s.”⁵⁷ The external discourse – necessary to attract investment and laborers – promoted the ubiquity of single family homes; but the internal discourse, according to Gish, “reflected more fully the complex reality of urbanization in Los Angeles.”⁵⁸ Increasingly, that reality included more population density, but still managed to retain the mythology of the garden-home. Apartment designs in Los Angeles appropriated the positive nature of Bellamyite utopian design, which constructed multi-family dwellings that felt like private homes.

Sometimes apartments must have felt like palaces, or at least impressions of palaces. By 1928 real estate interests in the city were producing a monthly publication called the *Los Angeles Guide and Apartment House Directory* that illuminated the well entrenched position of apartment buildings in the metropolitan housing market; there were hundreds of complexes listed in just the more urban areas of Los Angeles. Tellingly, even buildings several miles west of the desirable downtown addresses sported prestige names like the Acacia Arms, the Astor Arms, or the exotic Chateau des Fleurs in Hollywood. Not infrequently, apartment buildings were

⁵⁶ *Pasadena Star-News*, June 9, 1928, in *Courtyard Cottages*, 167.

⁵⁷ Gish, “Building Los Angeles,” 57.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 58.

portrayed to be outposts of empires; one was even called the Empire, another Empress, one was named after the Egyptian city of Alexandria, and yet another announced that it was Saxonia. Literary and biblical references combined in the naming of a new apartment on Fremont street – the Ben Hur, and if the exotic was often represented in names like the Alhambra, it is still hard to imagine that an Angeleno landlord would have named his building El Mahdi Terrace – but there was an apartment with that name at 1016 S. Kinsley Avenue. Perhaps the apartment building that most effectively captured the feeling behind Los Angeles’ grand names and designs was the most simple: the Fantasy at 1376 Ridgewood Street, next to two film production studios between Gower and Wilton in the heart of Hollywood.⁵⁹ All these names functioned to legitimate the status and design of multi-family dwellings in a town that had once based its promotion on the single family home.

“Design,” according to urban studies scholar Paul Knox, “has an unambiguous role in facilitating the circulation and accumulation of capital, helping to stimulate consumption through product differentiation aimed at particular market segments.”⁶⁰ It also contributes, Knox insists, to fundamental processes like social reproduction, the legitimization of authority, and national identity.⁶¹ I would add, however, that it can perform these functions against the grain of dominant social forces. It can seem to be stable, while still offering personal meaning that has drawn from the values of very different forms of cultural capital.

By the early twentieth century, University of Southern California sociologist Emory Bogardus was examining the unusual popularity of courtyard-cottages that seemed to be sprouting up in Los Angeles. This rapidly growing form, usually called the house-court, was

⁵⁹ Booklet, *Los Angeles Guide and Apartment House Directory* (June, 1928), California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, CTP Box 5, Folder 7, Oviatt Library Special Collections, California State University Northridge.

⁶⁰ Paul L. Knox, *Cities and Design* (London: Routledge, 2011), 4.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

significant enough that the city enacted a new zoning ordinance to define the conditions constituting this type of building and to stipulate the minimum amount of land required for a given number of occupants. Bogardus analyzed one-thousand two-hundred and two house-courts that were inhabited by sixteen-thousand men, women, and children in 1915. First, he historicized this Los Angeles form, connecting it to the region's past by insisting that "The house-court is a modification of a type of Spanish architecture."⁶²

Bogardus theorized that the modern house-court was derived directly from old Spanish adobe structures, and he attributed this genealogy to the need for "cheap houses."⁶³ Using a building classification developed by a fellow University of Southern California sociologist, Bogardus sorted house-courts into six categories: adobes, shacks, barracks, separate two-room structures, concrete houses, and bungalow courts. The later three forms are the ones most associated with contemporary "courtyard cottages" from the period of the 1910s through the 1920s. Bogardus noted that, as a unit, the constituency of house-court inhabitants would represent a good sized city.⁶⁴ The problem that the University of Southern California sociologists were evaluating was the serious poverty they noted among the residents of this particular housing form, due in part to the crowding of multiple families into relatively large (three to six rooms) cottages. The population was composed mostly of Mexican and Italian immigrants, and three of Los Angeles' seven housing inspectors, according to Bogardus, were devoted only to inspections of house-courts.⁶⁵

⁶² Emory Bogardus, "The House-Court Problem," *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Nov. 1916): 391-399.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 391.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 397.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 398.

In spite of this historical association of house-courts with poverty and public health problems, Bogardus concluded that “The house-court has many splendid possibilities in the way of housing the people. The ventilation and sunshine possibilities are excellent. In a well-constructed court the danger from fire is small.” The idea that there could be a more utopian manifestation of this more community-oriented, cooperative house form was not lost on Bogardus, who finally asserted that “the garden-city idea is possible with the house-court type of dwellings.” He was somewhat prescient in this regard, for over the next decade, in many of the more desirable sections of the city and suburbs, “bungalow-courts,” acknowledged to be the best and most attractive form of the house-court, would become alternatives to traditional apartment buildings – not only for their cost effectiveness, but for the quality of life that might be imagined in a development that could integrate the best aspects of individualism and cooperation with the most attractive facets of country and city life combined.

The Bogardus study, along with the many descriptive home brochures that predate Marston’s St. Francis development in 1909, help to undermine the conventional historiography that considers Marston to be the innovator of this design. To be sure, urban studies scholar Todd Gish points out that from the perspective of elite architects (but not necessarily elite subdividers, builders, and landowners) Marston certainly legitimized the bungalow court – he made it elegant and respectable for the upper classes. As a rental housing solution, however, variations of multifamily houses, including courtyards, had, as Gish insists, “constituted an important part of the physical, social, and economic fabric of Los Angeles from at least 1900.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Gish, “Bungalow Court Housing,” 366.

It was not surprising that the efficient (and profitable) multi-unit courtyard building would transcend humble and undesirable origins in Los Angeles. Jacob Riis had visited Los Angeles in 1905 and commented that the city's slums – and these were mostly the poorest classes of multi-family courtyard houses that Bogardus had examined – were as bad as anything he had photographed in New York. This was not good news for Los Angeles boosters who promoted the city as the place where everyone could buy a single family home.⁶⁷ Yet, as Gish points out, ordinary people liked courtyard houses; they were affordable, could combine a pleasant use of indoor and outdoor living space, and required less upkeep than single-family homes. What remained, then, was to reinvent the bungalow-court as utopian housing.

Repositioning the best forms of bungalow-courts was in the interests of landowners and builders who wished to profit from the growth in urban, middle-class rental markets that would expand in the 1920s, but before this transpired, the courtyard form would be adapted to an explicit and uncompromised housing style planned for Job Harriman's Llano del Rio colony in 1914. At Harriman's request, Alice Constance Austin, one of the few woman architects of the late nineteenth-century, and at the time a committed socialist, master-planned an expansive vision for Llano del Rio in a level of detail that included blueprints and elevations for all its buildings, including living quarters. According to urban planning historian Dolores Hayden, "Austin's work emerges from the ideological controversy about feminism and housing design that animated reform circles dedicated to communitarian socialism."⁶⁸ Austin would insist on kitchenless-courtyard homes for all Llano residences; food would be prepared in centralized facilities.

⁶⁷Gish, "Bungalow Court Housing," 387.

⁶⁸Dolores Hayden, "Two Utopian Feminists and their Campaigns for Kitchenless Houses," *Signs* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Winter, 1978): 274-290.

Though at first Harriman seemed committed to a more standardized single-family home model, Austin did convince him that the community should approach domestic life more radically. Just as Bellamy had advocated in *Looking Backward*, Austin designed centralized kitchens, laundries, and even dining halls to serve the communitarian courtyard residences. Though this plan was never completely built due to Llano del Rio's failure, Harriman had agreed to the designs that Austin produced, as well as the changes to social relations that they were intended to promote.

While this design would later be known as a Bellamy apartment because of the popularity it would achieve through *Looking Backward*, it is certain that Bellamy was not the innovator of the idea – even with respect to mass housing. I have already discussed the upper-class precedent for kitchenless homes that existed in the form of the apartment-hotel, but Hayden presents a compelling argument that the kitchenless, multi-family unit as a solution to ease the domestic burden for women had been advocated for decades before Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*, and, furthermore, must have been well known to him.

Melusina Fay Pierce founded the Cambridge Cooperative Society, which had operated a cooperative store, bakery, and laundry near Harvard Square since 1869, and over the next two years she attempted to convince landowners to let her facilities operate in support of apartment house residents, who would reside in buildings without kitchens or laundries.⁶⁹ Though Pierce would never succeed in convincing Bostonian developers to build residences that relied on centralized housekeeping, Bellamy and Alice Austin must have been directly influenced by her ideas, and many of those who followed Bellamy into Nationalism, including Bradford Peck and Charlotte Perkins Gilman also would adopt the idea of the kitchenless, courtyard home.

⁶⁹ Hayden, "Two Utopian Feminists," 274-290.

For her part, Pierce wrote an explicit treatise called *Cooperative Housekeeping: How To Do It and How Not To Do It – a Study in Sociology*, which was published in 1884 – four years before *Looking Backward*. Pierce presented the treatise four years earlier – 1880 – at the annual meeting of the Illinois Social Science Association in Chicago, so it is clear that the relationship among housing design, form, and social order had been an ongoing dialogue that Bellamyite utopianism tapped into, rather than invented. But one of Pierce’s most astute observations, that masculine-gendered occupations had continuously taken advantage of technological innovations intended to improve productivity and reduce hard labor, while the feminine “domestic sphere” had been ignored because of the lower value attributed to women, does not seem to have been taken up either by Bellamy or the mainstream of the Nationalist movement – with the exception of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who noted the same inequality in her 1898 treatise *Women and Economics*.

Similarly, for the most part, kitchenless designs would be ignored by Southern Californian builders. Even prominent apartment-hotels, like The Townhouse Los Angeles, located appropriately at the intersection of Wilshire Blvd. and Commonwealth, offered its “desirable permanent residents” individual kitchens along with centralized commissary services.⁷⁰ Alice Austin specialized in kitchenless home designs in her private architectural practice in Los Angeles after the failure of Llano del Rio, but she seems never to have been able to sell her designs to any developer in either the public or private sector. Still, courtyard cottages with kitchens, in both multi-family and single-family configurations, were commercialized successfully and grew to become one of the more common and emblematic symbols of Southern California lifestyle.

⁷⁰ Brochure, “The Townhouse Los Angeles, The Smart Hotel of Southern California” (Los Angeles, 1932), California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860-1990, CTP Box 6, Folder 1, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

The idea of kitchenless homes, like many of Los Angeles' never-built designs, is important in spite of the fact that it did not enter the physical domain of bricks and mortar. "To have home harmony in decoration in the truest sense," a 1911 full page multi-color display ad for Lowe Brothers Liquid Paint noted, "it is necessary to consider something besides the harmony of exterior and interior architectural styles."⁷¹ While the Lowe Brothers were most concerned that harmony should exist between interior and exterior color schemes, they also noted that their line of paints included "a product for every purpose," and "purpose" is what Bellamyite and other feminist designers emphasized when they planned homes and communities for a new society. Such communities would, in the words of Melusina Fay Pierce, bring into being a "new Civilized Housekeeping for the American household."⁷² Correcting the economic imbalance between men and women was, perhaps, the only gender-related problem of social relations that all (or nearly all) radicals agreed upon – even the politics of women's suffrage was entangled in the broader argument about the desirability of non-Anglo voting rights.⁷³ The race issue, regardless of radical planners' attempts to silence it, hardened the boundaries of what could be transformed and what would remain unchanged.

Yet in the categories of class and lifestyle the Los Angeles area promoted new understandings of integration: Long Beach boosters enumerated the advantages that made their region "supreme," claiming that "instead of farms of one hundred to three hundred acres, scattering a sparse population over a vast area, and producing that isolation which makes rural life so distasteful to many persons, five or ten acres here make a homestead." They observed, or

⁷¹ Advertisement, "The Home Harmonious," Lowe Brothers High Standard Liquid Paint, *Sunset Magazine* (Philadelphia: The Sunset Magazine Publishers, March 1911), 182.

⁷² Melusina Fay Pierce, *Co-operative Housekeeping: How To Do It and How Not To Do It – a Study in Sociology* (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Company, 1884), 154.

⁷³ Pierce, Appendix. Though a feminist activist, Pierce hesitated about extending the franchise to women, contending that it would "double" the voting power of people she called "aliens."

at least asserted, that a country road in Long Beach resembled a suburban street – in fact boosters claimed country roads actually were extensions of suburban streets. Even more remarkably, promoters surprisingly exclaimed, side by side with the homes of people who have the means to live without working are “families which must make their livings out of their little ranches.” Bowling alleys, bathhouses, and churches were advanced as examples of progressive modernity – as is the city’s rigorously enforced “no saloon” policy.⁷⁴ This sixty-eight page booster brochure painted a remarkable picture of houses, amusements, economic opportunities, and land in a rural-city where the working and leisure classes could live comfortably as neighbors. Within the framework of a white city – which did not even need to be articulated – Long Beach did, in fact, imagine itself to be a new place.

During the course of this study, the metaphors of “home” and “book” have crystallized the way that ideas about radical communities could be situated and understood as a part of everyday community life. I will return to those metaphors now, citing, not Edward Bellamy, Job Harriman, or Gaylord Wilshire, but Eugene Murmann, the author and publisher of *California Gardens*, who in 1918 presented fifty different plans for landscapes that bungalow owners could create in the Southland, declaring that “Every plan is different, and no matter how little or how great your requirements may be, you will find a plan in this book that is particularly adapted to your needs.”⁷⁵ Diversity and individuality seemed to permeate all Southland plans, except, of course, for those that involved peopling places. In this, Murmann’s garden plans were typical.

⁷⁴Pamphlet, Sidney Kendell, “Long Beach: City by the Sea,” (n.d.).

⁷⁵ Eugene O. Murmann, *California Gardens* (Los Angeles: Eugene O. Murmann, 1918), 12.

Murmann's dream for California landscaping was, in fact, just like the dreams of radicals, real estate men, and readers – and the All-Year Club of California, which thought of Southern California as a grand hotel, asserting that the region had planned “accommodations to suit every preference.” The Club noted that “perhaps nowhere else in the world is there greater diversity.” But these boosters, who had once been so successful at recruiting labor to the region, did not mean diversity in peoples; they meant diversity in hotel rooms. “Hotels in down-town and residential districts . . . at every southern California beauty spot . . . offer varying degrees of metropolitan smartness and informality. Southern California is a year-round vacationland.”⁷⁶ Housing and imagination, codependent and coordinated, made the Southland what people – mostly white people – needed it to be.

⁷⁶ Pamphlet, *Southern California Hotels* (Los Angeles: All-Year Club of Southern California, 1934), California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860-1936, CTP Box 3, Folder 2, Oviatt Library Special Collections, California State University, Northridge. [Ellipses are in the original document.]

CONCLUSION

In a research study conducted in 1935, the *Atlantic Monthly's* editor Edward Weeks, the American philosopher John Dewey, and the historian Charles Beard, all ranked *Looking Backward* (in independent, unprompted responses) as the second most influential book published since 1885 – second only behind Marx's *Capital*. Given the longevity these notable scholars attributed to Edward Bellamy's work, and the fact that it was a huge best seller during an era when more Americans were literate and able to afford books than ever before, it may not be surprising that this sociologic fiction would have influenced people who were building America's new cities. What has been, I suppose, more surprising in light of popular conceptions about the origin and character of Los Angeles, is that the elites in this new city might have been influenced by the material incarnation of any form of radical idea or cooperation at all.

But I have argued that Los Angeles was, in a sense, an intentional community. It was planned as a utopian alternative to Eastern urbanism and Midwestern rural life. By ignoring the complex social issues of the city – particularly race and class – city planners followed a utopian literary blueprint that imagined harmony through societal homogeneity. While cooperation presented an alternative to the type of capitalism that predominated during the period, it was not impervious to the racist ideas that could be naturalized by new interpretations of biological science and Darwinism. Such theories consistently were embraced by both the left and right, which were nearly always in conversation during this period. These facts certainly challenge the idea that political polarization was always clear cut, but they do not support the idea that radicalism – and especially its utopian variant – ever did much to nurture social equality.

In Los Angeles utopia managed to stay in mass consciousness because it was produced by a coherent blending of collective social myths with a vibrant mass consumer culture. One attraction of consumer culture is that it can shed its material limitations to loan society a positive and hopeful expectation of a better quality of life brought about by the “new” and “modern.” Walter Benjamin located this mythic-material combination in the industrial exhibitions of the late nineteenth century, noting that “the enthronement of commodity, with its glitter of distractions” conditioned the masses to ‘identify’ with “the exchange value of commodities.”¹ Similarly, historian Robert Rydell notes that these fin de siècle fairs “centered on the interpretation of Darwinian theories about racial development and utopian dreams about America’s material and national progress.”² But I have argued that it was not only autonomous venues like pageants, exhibitions, amusement parks, or separate colonies where utopias could flourish; mythic-material relations could be found within mainstream social structures. These utopian qualities, in essence, informed the transnational perception of Los Angeles at least since the real estate boom of the late nineteenth century, and continue to do so today.

As to the origins of Angeleno utopia – there were many – but the idea that post-Mexican Los Angeles had been transformed into a new urban utopia was a social imaginary that owed its creation to fictive literature and imagined projects as much as to any of the seemingly more practical efforts of the region’s early developers or planners. There were direct connections between Bellamyism and the Los Angeles dream, which were manifested in the cultural, social, and political life of the city, as well as in its physical appearance. I have argued that there are certain aspects of Bellamy’s socialist vision that became central to sustaining the public image of Los Angeles, and were reinforced by the city’s early real estate developer Gaylord Wilshire and

¹ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 18, in Edward S. Cutler, *Recovering the New: Transatlantic Roots of Modernism* (Hanover: University of New England Press, 2001), 139.

² Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 235.

its most eminent novelist-politician, Upton Sinclair. Utopian literature worked, as theorist Jeffrey Karnicky, following Giles Deleuze, insisted, “not as a representation of the world, but as a kind of creation.”³ This is the relationship I hypothesize between literature and Los Angeles.

Utopianism – radical utopianism – was never embraced by a majority of people in the Los Angeles area, but substantial evidence does suggest that this perspective was a significant part of the political dialogue through the early years of the twentieth century – in a way that it has not been during any period since then. In addition to the works of Bellamy and Sinclair, we can point to the literary radicalism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Frank Norris that most certainly was a cultural force in the southland during this era, and if there is now a popular perception about connections between cultural production and politics, it was surely paralleled during this earlier period when literature was customarily expected to be “an active agent in the social process.”⁴

But in reality, radical perspectives, while once quite legitimate in American political discourse, have been erased by the administrative regimes that stabilized power during the decades after World War II. Earlier repressions of radicalism, like the LAPD response to the dynamiting of the LA Times building in 1910 and the Red Scare of 1919 – 1921 may have played some role in derailing cooperation, but they did not end the negotiation between utopia and the mainstream. It took the holocausts of World War II, popular perceptions in the West about the repressive regime of Joseph Stalin, and the pervasiveness of Cold War propaganda to finally delegitimize the very concept of utopia in social thought.⁵ In fact, the profound disillusion

³ Jeffrey Karnicky, *Contemporary Fiction and the Ethics of Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 23.

⁴ Hans Robert Jauß, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 3-45, in Robert Holub, *Crossing Borders: Reception Theory, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 17.

⁵ See Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 53-82, for a discussion about the causes of anti-utopianism.

these events brought to consciousness repressed even the memory of earlier periods and alternative traditions that had incorporated more political diversity.

It was not coincidental that cooperative and utopian social movements once had seemed most popular in Southern California, as observers like Carey McWilliams had noted at least since the early twentieth century. Neither was it happenstance that so much Cold War energy germinated in Los Angeles and coalesced around individuals whose occupations constructed popular language and visual impressions, such as literature, theater, and film. The technologies in these industries all figured prominently in utopian visions; to a great extent they crystallized how the transformation from capitalism to utopia would progress, and as content and communications originators, these industries always had been the main producers of cultural memory.

In spite of utopia's fall from grace, cultural memories of utopian origins have been more durable than they at first appeared to be. They do not, however, always continue to break out in the places where we would have expected. Throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century, utopian ideas, using more practical-sounding names, continued to burn on a low flame in social and political movement culture, and manifested even more vibrantly in a type of public-private sector corporate cooperation that effectively adapted the literature of utopia to the needs of industry.⁶ Kaiser Steel, for example, called its 1969 "booster" booklet series, *California's Century III: The State of Things To Come*.⁷ The very title evokes both California exceptionalism and the futuristic hopes of earlier utopian planners, and under the frontispiece illustration, the company acknowledges the California State Division of Highways, California State Chamber of

⁶It is certainly notable that early in the twentieth century the inverse was also true. See King Camp Gillette's book, *The World Corporation* (1916) for an example of the corporate form applied to the construction of utopia.

⁷Booklet, *Westward: Golden State Issue*, "California's Century III: The State of Things To Come," vol. 23, no. 3, 1969 (Oakland: Kaiser Steel Corporation), Don Meadows Papers MS-R01, Box 69, Folder 2, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

Commerce, Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, and the Construction Marketing and Commercial Research Departments of Kaiser Steel (whose motto is “Action to Serve the Growing West.”) No more overt emblem of public-private cooperation was apparent even during the heyday of California boosterism.

The mid-century Kaiser marketers slipped their corporation into the timeline of California history, commenting that “it required vision, ingenuity and a boundless confidence in the future to transform California from the wilderness of 1769, to the modern, progressive state it is today.” “It took those same qualities,” according to the company, “to establish Kaiser Steel in California as the West’s first fully integrated steel mill back in 1941.”⁸ This almost unnoticed effort to historicize modern corporate businesses, and in doing so to instill in them mythic “founder” qualities, represents a transformation of utopian literature from social prophecy or jeremiad to imaginary interpretation of an historical past. If the prior use of utopia was easy to criticize as fictive or simplistic, the more modern usage sneaks into what we presume to be objective narrative nearly unnoticed and without critique.

As an illustration of this point, Kaiser’s booklet proceeds through a series of carefully arranged feature articles to demonstrate California and Kaiser exceptionalism, carrying readers from a history of water, “offbeat” technology innovation, California’s “fun explosion,” steel consumption (a new dimension to California’s noted consumerism), architectural design, and, finally, to racial unrest.⁹ We can only imagine the storyboards marketers must have presented to corporate executives when they decided to address the 1965 Watts rebellion proactively (presumably to diffuse its negative significance) instead of burying it in silence the way uncomfortable Los Angeles realities had been handled in the past. Coupled with a nostalgic (and

⁸ “California’s Century III,” back cover.

⁹ *ibid.*, 6-8, 19.

utopian) reimagining of the 1960s counterculture, where these same marketers asserted that “the transformation of peaceful urban hippie communes into hotbeds of criminal activity, and continued campus unrest all give Californians pause as they count their blessings,” Kaiser’s writers deftly demonstrated that, while Californians were aware of social issues, they could counter such disturbances because the territory was a magical geography that had been conceived in “the image of a perpetual pleasuredome.”¹⁰ In late capitalism, apparently, leisurely consumption could overpower civil unrest.

In 1969 the race issue was a far more public debate than it had been in 1888, and Kaiser’s utopian writers could not simply erase it like earlier novelists had done. Los Angeles had been the site of the Zoot Suit Riots in 1941; an African American rebellion on August 11, 1965; it had become the catalyst for nationwide ghetto rebellions; it was the site of a setback to racial liberalism when Robert Kennedy was assassinated at one of the area’s marquee hotels in 1968, and has continued to function as a lightning rod for racial tension into the present period.

Carey McWilliams first brought attention to the racial struggle in Los Angeles in the 1930s – one of the few mainstream scholar-journalists who did so. Prior to that period, there was almost no meaningful discussion about racial equality, and there was no exception to this silence among Nationalists, Socialists, the Socialist Labor Party, Single-Taxers, the American Federation of Labor or any leftist Southern California party – except one – The American communists, who would rename and reform their organization in 1919 as the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). The early party in Los Angeles consisted largely of Jews from poorer areas of the city, who perhaps more than others, perceived the connection between class exploitation and race. This was probably one reason the race issue was on the CPUSA’s agenda.

¹⁰ “California’s Century III,” 19.

Still another, and maybe more important, reason for the CPUSA's vocal support for equal rights was the movement's (and many of Los Angeles' Jewish members') connections to the Soviet Union and, hence, the Comintern. Continued structural racism was an obvious vulnerability in capitalist society, and one that offered a poignant critique for those who advocated revolutionary transition to an alternative social system. In fact, the Comintern had decided that an integral part of Third Period communism was going to be a focus on ethnic and racial discrimination. As Party criticism and activity in protest of unfair labor and racial practices in the Southland became more visible, significant numbers of African Americans and Japanese Americans became members. This, in turn, transformed the Los Angeles Party into a multi-ethnic organization – perhaps the only one in Southern California that truly represented what George Sanchez has called a “politics of opposition.”¹¹ Even as ideas about American Communist activism changed when the Party transitioned from Third Period to Popular Front ideology in the 1930s, this multi-racial membership and perspective remained intact.¹²

In fact, what distinguished the CPUSA, Theosophists, Mankind United, The Utopian Society, and Reciprocal Economy Movement from other socialists and advocates of cooperation was that they all promoted platforms of racial equality. Though in reality none of these organizations' memberships except for the Communist Party seem to have included very many people of color, it is their vision of heterogeneity as a desirable social trait that differentiated them from their contemporaries. In the final analysis, most developers of new cities and new societies, though they could imagine homes, technologies, and culture for everyone, also imagined that everyone was white.

¹¹ George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 227-252.

¹² See Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 77.

In 1988, exactly one-hundred years after Edward Bellamy imagined America in the year 2000, the Los Angeles notables who comprised the organization called the Los Angeles 2000 Committee delivered a report about the future of the city to Mayor Tom Bradley. Rather than looking backward one-hundred and thirteen years, as did Bellamy, LA 2000 looked forward only twelve years; a task that did not require literary imagination, but only the precision interval and confidence level of the RAND Corporation's predictive modeling tools. The Committee's final report did not predict marvelous new modes of transportation, communication, or a social infrastructure to eliminate poverty while improving equal access to leisure. The report was more circumspect, planning a path toward livable communities, environmental quality, individual fulfillment, enriched diversity, as well as predicting that Los Angeles would become what the report called "a crossroads city."¹³ The Committee's recommendations, according to Chairman James P. Miscoll and President Jane G. Pisano, were "not unprecedented in any scope." They noted that "Los Angeles, after all, has a history of inventing itself."¹⁴

Booster utopianism is not easily uncovered in the pages of this booklet, which resembles the notes pages of a corporate annual report more than an expression of vision. Rather, the report to Mayor Bradley recommended a range of new strategic and tactical planning initiatives, such as "a regional growth management plan, a new city of Los Angeles comprehensive plan, and community and neighborhood district planning"¹⁵ The Committee recommended "a comprehensive overhaul of the present City of Los Angeles zoning ordinance," which they acknowledged was "old, unintelligible, inconsistent, badly organized and out of step with recent changes in design and land development practices and policies."¹⁶ Zoning was essentially a bad

¹³ *LA 2000: a City for the Future* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles 2000 Committee, 1988), 1.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 23.

system, the Committee concluded, but some form of it was still necessary to achieve the “positive goals of livable communities.” Zoning, it seems, had become another of the modern city’s necessary evils.

Los Angeles in 1988 had developed some obstacles to livability, and the report openly discussed the city’s crime, which had “shown a steady rate of increase between 1977 and 1986,” led by the economic threats of “employee theft, larceny, and consumer fraud.” Committee members also noted the city’s seventy-thousand gang members and devoted three pages to a discussion of the corrections system and proposals for “alternatives for reducing criminal justice costs.”¹⁷ Individual fulfillment, one of the committees major goals, was to be achieved, not through high or even mass culture, as the twentieth-century’s utopian developers had hoped, but by reducing the high school dropout rate, eliminating illiteracy, and overcoming the “crisis in human service delivery” that had rendered the city and county programs for “Dependent Care, Health Care, and the Homeless,” ineffective.¹⁸

Still, Los Angeles was to remain “a city of opportunity,” and the Committee believed that, in spite of the social and infrastructural deficiencies it had noted, by “actively promoting a positive business climate that will attract domestic companies as well as foreign companies looking for a U.S. location,” it could magically leverage its population diversity to become an international trading center; a “crossroads city” functioning as “a gateway to the Pacific Rim.”¹⁹ Notably, the report epilogue, entitled “Making Dreams Come True,” was written by historian Kevin Starr, who located the city of the year 2000 within the continuum of Los Angeles history, but avoided the utopian promises earlier boosters would have made. Instead, Starr, usually an upbeat promoter of California culture, asserted that “Los Angeles 2000 is asking a simple, yet

¹⁷ *LA 2000*, 26.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 60-64.

profound question: has Los Angeles, in its size, complexity, diversity and problems, lost, quite simply, the capacity to promote the happiness, the individual fulfillment, of its citizenry?”²⁰

Starr concluded that, while Los Angeles may not ever have been what its boosters promised it was, the mere fact that it was now looking toward its future (Starr, who realized that twelve years was not much of a forward look, mentioned a potential vision for 2050) established it as a worthwhile place that was, in the end, waiting for rediscovery.²¹

Part of imagining a future, I have argued, requires rediscovering pasts. Los Angeles does, as the LA 2000 Committee concluded, have a history of reinvention, but the inventor’s tools include a history of intentional erasure and neglectful amnesia. Norman Klein has characterized the city as “a built environment that also contains an evacuation.”²² The minor utopias I have explored in this study have not been essential to the surviving Los Angeles narrative, but they are illuminating examples of actuated ideals, if only temporarily functioning within the material world. These places emerged when mainstream capitalism was experimenting with its reach; with its forms. Utopia itself landed at many different sites – at farms; at suburbs; in cities; where younger people gathered; where the unemployed searched for answers; even where older workers imagined a new productive future. Utopia’s lifecycle was brief in these places, but there remained a few rare sites where it thrived. Nineteenth-century Darwinists or Spencerians might have called this trait “diversifying selection”; I might call it smart capitalist strategy.

If not in the pages of municipal strategic plans, utopian ideals still seem to be useful to real estate developers. Land, home, and utopia have been inexorably connected, and a new strategy for ideal places has been visible ever since the post-colonial period of the Little Landers’ Tujunga experiment. Sometime after 1922 a subdivision of lots was transformed into “The Land

²⁰LA 2000, 86.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Norman Klein, *The History of Forgetting*, 10.

of the Golden Aftermath,” a new community “dedicated to the men and women who have retired or are about to retire from the occupations of their earlier careers.”²³ It was to be an egalitarian place where “former occupations, former achievements, and former fame count for neither good nor bad, but where every man is judged by his own character.”²⁴ The Land of the Golden Aftermath inherited Marshall Hartranft’s and William Smythe’s dreams. It carried forward the myth that “anything grows,” and, most relevant to the target population, the myth that “the climate of the Tujunga valley helps to conserve the bodily vigor and fitness far past the allotted three score years and ten.” Its promoters insisted that “the Tujunga valley has come to be a land of little homes, a land of idealism and lack of ostentation,” and a place “where the retired doctor, lawyer, mechanic, railroad man or bank president can get into a pair of blue overalls and build cobble stone walls or cultivate all the vegetables and flowers and all the curious plants and trees that the department of agriculture ever heard about.”²⁵ As with all Southern California utopias, the sales pitch offered modest homes at modest prices, but an individual could find a larger more expensive home if that was really necessary.

Then again, this same utopia emerged still later in the twentieth century; a completely modern example of utopia’s descent from heaven to ground level. Like the Land of the Golden Aftermath, this latest colony demonstrated the way utopian discourse was still essential to capitalism, and most assuredly essential to real estate development. Even the way Leisure World reporter Vera Moorman characterized her publicly traded company’s goals, when she wrote, “Let’s build entire worlds for those who need them most,” invokes the grandest goals of

²³Wallace M. Morgan, *The Land of the Golden Aftermath* (Tujunga: Tujunga Valley Home Developers, n.d.), no pagination.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

California's utopian developers.²⁶ Leisure World's founder, following (in my formulation) his spiritual ancestors Marshall Hartranft, Charles Weeks, Job Harriman, and Gaylord Wilshire, was now, according to Moorman, the latest in a lineage of Southern California place-makers. He had "moved mountains, turned wastelands into productive residential and commercial cities, [and] transformed barren fields into lush gardens where luxurious, contemporary apartments sprawl today."²⁷ Selling apartments to seniors – selling life – needed and found the same discourse that boosters had used to sell Southern California in the late-nineteenth century.

Like early-twentieth century utopias, Leisure World would find ways to attract the "better people" that might really be preferred in such a society. Unlike Los Angeles in 1893, Leisure World has no place for "the worthy poor," but if one can afford to live there, it might seem like utopia; it has eliminated class by eliminating work; it has its own healthcare system (though it is not provided free); it offers a community of peers, again noting that eliminating conflict demands a certain amount of sameness. So utopia continues to progress, but "progress" is neither inevitable nor universal. It is always imagined by those who seek better worlds, or, failing that, who, like suburban homeowners or Leisure World colonists, seek at least better houses in which to pass the time in the only world they can ever know. To that end, Los Angeles – imagined, built, or demolished – has proven to be a place where humanity's struggles extend well beyond the everyday.

²⁶Vera Moorman, "One Man's Mission: Give Rebirth to Life in Later Years," *The Story of a Wonderful "New Way of Life"*: Rossmore Leisure World, Laguna Hills, Ca, Don Meadows Collection, MS-R01, FB 22, Folder 8, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

²⁷ibid.

According to the 2010 Census, which is useful for measuring Southland life one-hundred twenty years after the close of the West was declared, what we can call the greater Los Angeles area now boasts a population of more than seventeen-million people. Within the consolidated metropolitan area itself (Combined Statistical Area), the territories that boosters and real estate developers had planned to maintain as rural-cities now consist of some of the nation's most densely populated areas; Harvard Heights, Westlake, and Palms all have densities of more than twenty-thousand people a square mile. The rural character of the city has, however, not evaporated, but instead has moved to the edges. As the desert surrounding Southland civilization once imbued the city with the perception that developers could produce magical progress, now agricultural production surrounding the metropolis provides a halo effect to what is in reality a congested, albeit horizontal, urban world.

If the utopian colonies and propositions to change the nature of Southland capitalism are now gone, so is the white city, which was always the center from which Los Angeles development was intended to radiate.²⁸ Los Angeles city/county is estimated to be no more than twenty-nine percent white as of 2013; the majority of the population consists of perhaps the most varied and dynamic mix of ethnicities and nationalities that live together anywhere in the nation. If power relations have not yet shifted from traditional Anglo dominance to coalitions of non-whites who now represent the majority, it is only a matter of time before this transition occurs.

All these demographic, economic, and ethnic changes are well studied; if Los Angeles was once a Petri dish where metropolitan growth or Israel Zangwill's melting pot phenomenon could be studied, it is now a gold mine of data about immigration, fragmentation, and population

²⁸ At the turn of the twenty-first century, it was estimated that one out of every three residents in Los Angeles county was foreign born. See Donald E. Miller, Jon Miller, and Grace Dryness "Religious Dimensions of the Immigrant Experience in Southern California," in *Southern California and the World*, Eric J. Heikkila and Rafael Pizarro, eds. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 101.

transformation. But something else has disappeared from the landscape; something which is not often studied; not even observed. Literature is now quite separate from everyday life – it does not seem to stimulate dreams. Maybe daydreams, but clearly not dreams that people intend to bring into the material world. Angelenos are not inspired by Edward Bellamy now – in fact, in the twenty-first century utopian novels are not likely to even be thought of as the “sociologic fiction” that Randolph Bourne wrote about last century. Instead, in post-modernity utopian literature exemplifies the naïve; the misguided and superficial understanding of economic and social systems – and of human nature. But I have argued that when literature was conceived to be a part of life – and writers were thought to be legitimate participants in social critique – utopia actually did exist. It did not prove to be the adaptive mutation that took hold; genetic drift did not move it toward survival of the fittest. But this should not be surprising, because human-made systems do not function according to natural laws; they are not organisms. The material that humans develop originates in ideas and plans, and new ideas and plans are always possible. As Los Angeles novelist Walter Mosley has so aptly written, “We make up, then make real.”²⁹ By recovering the visions that passed through culture and movements before, we may bring new utopian ideals, configured to improve a pluralistic social order, into everyday life. The literary and the material, like the real estate developer and the radical, may, in fact, not be as inconsequential to one another as we have supposed.

²⁹ Walter Mosley, “Black to the Future,” *Envisioning the Future: Science Fiction and the Next Millennium*, ed. by Marleen S. Barr (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 202.

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Essay on Sources

There is certainly no dearth of primary sources about either Southern California's past or utopian literature, which are the two domains of knowledge I relied upon most in this dissertation. Historians of this region, and of utopia generally, are blessed with the availability of many physical archives within easy reach and the digitized resources of the Los Angeles Public Library, University of Southern California, and California State University, Northridge, to name only a few of the more comprehensive online collections.

Still, there remain several rich and underused area resources that deserve special attention. In my work, the most important of these has been University of California, Irvine's Special Collections. The Don Meadows Papers, in particular, proved to be a wonderful and unexpected resource. When I first took the elevator up to the Langston Library fifth floor, where Special Collections is hidden beyond a pod of isolated offices and a rooftop patio, I expected to spend perhaps two weeks perusing the few "Los Angeles" folders I had located using the collections' online finding aids. That's when I met the head archivist, who immediately called for the files I had identified, but also began to tell me about Don Meadows and the collection that he had donated. One of the stories he told me was how Meadows, a local Orange County historian, would travel to businesses that he heard were closing and ask for all their files – brochures, leaflets, and pamphlets that would otherwise be discarded. I was intrigued, for one of the ideas I had was to look at how real estate was sold in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I wondered if the Meadows collections might include some real estate brochures. Needless to say, the two weeks that I had planned to spend researching in the UCI collections turned into an entire summer, with several follow up trips during the next two academic quarters.

I learned that Orange County is an interesting vantage point from which to think about Los Angeles (an idea that also was suggested to me by Jeremiah Axelrod). I also learned that I could learn a lot from thinking about L.A. and Orange County together – and Irvine is a rich and meaningful place to accomplish that task.

The Don Meadows folders are organized by topic and, in many cases, by community, which provides a unique opportunity to compare differences in the way real estate and identity were imagined within areas that might otherwise have seemed to be homogeneous. I found, for example, that when I needed to understand how Newport Beach boosters might have perceived the development of their port apart from the way other Orange County residents may have envisioned it, such discrete literature usually was available. Researchers interested in examples of commercial and community-originated promotional literature covering Southern California would do well to explore the University of California, Irvine collections, as I hope I have demonstrated in this dissertation.

Newspapers and Periodicals

The American Federationist

The American Globe

The Arena

Bi-Monthly Oil Digest & Oil News

California Eagle

California Southland Magazine

The Colored American Magazine

Co-operation – a Magazine to Spread the Knowledge of the Co-operative Movement

The Crisis: Recording the Darker Races

Charles Weeks' Intensive Agriculture and Intensive Human Culture

Land of Sunshine

Llano Colonist

Los Angeles Herald

Los Angeles Post

Los Angeles Times

The Nationalist

The New Nation

Newport News

Out West Magazine

Overland Monthly

The Pacific Co-operator

San Francisco Call

The Saturday Post

The Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer

Sunland-Tujunga News

Sunset: The Magazine of the Pacific and of all the Far West

The Sunset Enterprise: National Soldiers' Home News

Upton Sinclair's EPIC News

Utopian News

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Michael Flürsheim Papers [1888 – 1903]. BANC MSS 76/109, Bancroft Library Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

California Tourism and Promotional Literature Collection, 1860 – 1936, CTP, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

Charles Weeks Collection, 1923-1982. URB/CW, Urban Archives, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

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Upton Sinclair Collection. Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Long Beach.

KKK Realm of California Collection. SC/KCR, Oviatt Library Special Collections and Archives, California State University, Northridge.

Marshall Hartranft Collection. Little Landers Historical Society, Bolton Hall Museum.

Don Meadows Papers. MS-RO1, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

Spencer Olin Papers. MS-FO24, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

Edna W. Phelps Collection. MS-R43, University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine.

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